



JOHNSON'S LIFE OF DRYDEN



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JOHNSON'S  
LIFE OF DRYDEN

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## NOTE

THE notes marked C.D.P and enclosed in square brackets have been supplied by Mr. C. D. Punchard, who has also drawn up the summary on pages ix. to xvi.



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## SUMMARY OF JOHNSON'S LIFE OF DRYDEN.

1. *Life of Dryden*, pp 1-41. Dryden was born in Northamptonshire in 1631, brought up as an Anabaptist, and inherited an estate worth two hundred pounds a year.

Educated at Westminster School and Cambridge, and wrote poems at both places.

First public performance, *Heroic Stanzas on Cromwell*, followed by *Asiree Reduz*, on the Restoration. (Johnson defends him from the charge of inconstancy.)

Wrote plays from 1663 for thirty-one years.

1. Wild Gallant, unsuccessful.
2. Rival Ladies, first attempt at dramatic rhyme.
3. Indian Emperor, sequel to Howard's *Indian Queen*.

In 1667, *Annus Mirabilis*, in quatrains; here he begins to commend his own performances.

In 1668 became Laureate and published *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*.

4. Secret Love
5. Sir Martin Marall, accused of plagiarism.
6. The Tempest, a variation of Shakespeare's play.

In 1673 he attacked Settle's *Empress of Morocco*.

7. An Evening's Love, with a preface on the Drama.
8. Tyrannic Love, severely criticised.
9. Conquest of Granada, majestic and incredible, ridiculed by Clifford.

Elkanah Settle retaliated by attacking the *Conquest of Granada*.

10. Marriage à-la-mode.
11. The Assignment, driven off the stage.
12. Amboyna, to inflame the nation against the Dutch.
13. Troilus and Cressida, imitation of Shakspeare.
14. The Spanish Friar, written against the Papists.
15. The Duke of Guise, offended the Covenanters.
16. Albion and Albanus, a musical drama.
17. The State of Innocence, imitated *Paradise Lost*.
18. Aureng Zebe, his most elaborate drama.
19. All for Love, "the only play he wrote for himself."
20. Limberham, prohibited for indecency.
21. Oedipus, Dryden was helped by Lee.
22. Don Sebastian, one of Dryden's best dramas.
23. Amphitryon, a very diverting play.
24. Cleomenes, mentioned in the *Guardian*.
25. King Arthur, never acted.
26. Love Triumphant, a tragi-comedy, 1694.

Johnson describes the state of the drama, and audiences; the means of profit to the author, viz., dedication, copy, the third night. Dryden often wrote a preface of criticism. His prologues were sought for by the dramatists.

He wrote rapidly; six dramas were published in 1678.

Buckingham and Rochester were his chief enemies.

Buckingham ridiculed him in *The Rehearsal*.

Rochester patronised Settle as a rival of Dryden.

Critics accused him of plagiarism; he offered no defence.

In 1679 Rochester employed men to waylay and beat Dryden.

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In 1680 he translated Epistles of Ovid, and wrote a course on translation.

He continued the work of Waller and Denham, and established the new versification.

4. His Translations, pp. 64-5.

Jonson copied the Latin author word by word.

Feltham translated line by line.

Sandys struggled to produce an equal number of lines.

Holiday devoted more attention to meaning than to words.

Cowley asserted his liberty, and too boldly left his authors.

Dryden fixed limits of poetical liberty, and gave rules and examples of translation.

Languages vary in style and idiom. The translator must express the author's thoughts as the author would have done had he been English. A translator should be like his author, and not try to excel him.

5. Effect of want on Dryden's works, pp. 65-7.

Poverty lessened the excellence and increased the number of Dryden's works. Had he written less he might not have written better.

His poems were mostly "occasional"; he could not choose his matter, nor delay the publication; he was circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Birth, marriage, funerals, wars, provide no new ideas.

Such compositions merit praise on account of these drawbacks.

6. Dryden's versification, pp. 67-77.

He learnt the alternately-rhymed stanza from Davenant.

He is fond of forced conceits. (Johnson gives examples.)

His *Aureng Zeb* marks the establishment of his principles of versification.

His writings often show a malignity to the priesthood, which suggests irreverence for religion.

He frequently suffered from want, the cause of which is doubtful. Tonson paid 250 guineas for his *Fables*; and treated Dryden with rudeness; the Ormond family were liberal to him; his salary as Laureate was very irregularly paid.

He was the literary monarch at Will's coffee-house.

He frequently shows his belief in astrology.

3. Dryden as a critic, pp. 55-64. He first taught the principles of composition.

*Dialogue on the Drama*: excellent portraits of English dramatists, the account of Shakspeare is a model of criticism. His criticism is that of a poet. Dryden leads the reader in quest of graceful Truth through fragrance and flowers: Rymer leads through thorns and brambles to ungraceful and repulsive truth. Dryden's criticism is majestic: Rymer's is ferocious.

Dryden wrote with a full mind, and did not elaborate his work; hence he is not constant. Thus he both defends and deserts dramatic rhyme.

His remarks on writers are not always trustworthy. (Johnson gives various examples, pp. 59, 60.)

His literature (literary knowledge) was limited to few books, and is either obvious, or superficial, or erroneous.

His general knowledge was extensive, resulting from an active, inquiring mind, a quick apprehension, a judicious selection, a happy memory, a keen appetite for knowledge, and a "powerful digestion."

Nearly all his prose consists of criticism.

His style is equable and varied, has no prominent characteristics, and is not easily imitated.

He continued the work of Waller and Denham, and established the new versification.

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7. *Absalom and Achitophel*, pp. 77-8. Political and controversial, containing all possible excellences of such a subject. Some lines are improper, many are irreligious: its allegories are strained too far; it wearies the reader; historical truth hampered the poet's powers, and prevented a fitting climax.

8. *The Medal*, pp. 78-9. On a narrow plan, though showing the writer's skill. The portrait of Shaftesbury is well delineated and strongly coloured.

9. *Threnodia Augustalis*, pp. 79-80. Defective because the metre is irregular; is neither tender nor dignified, neither magnificent nor pathetic. Shows too much pleasure at the prospect of the new reign to be a sincere lament over the late King.

10. *Lyric Poems*, pp. 80-2. The poem on Mrs. Killigrew is the noblest ode in our language.

The first *Ode on St. Ceciliu's Day* is splendid, vigorous, and striking, but inferior to the second.

*Eleonora* shows Dryden's skill in elegy, but lacks illustration. The praise is too general because the poet did not know the object of his praises.

11. *Religio Laici*, pp. 82-3. The only voluntary effusion; rather argumentative than poetical; a happy example of a "middle kind of writing," neither towering to the skies, nor creeping along the ground.

12. *The Hind and Panther*, pp. 83-6. Dryden's longest poem. Similar in style to *Religio Laici*. The scheme is injudicious and incommodious. It is absurd for one beast to counsel another to believe in the infallibility of the Pope, to discuss the Nicene Fathers, and to declare herself to be the Catholic Church. Montague and Prior detected these incongruities and

properly estimated them. Pope, a Catholic, names this poem as the most correct of Dryden's works. The first part was intended to be a specimen of majestic poetry. Some lines are lofty, elegant, and majestic: others fail to carry out the author's intention.

The diction of the second and third parts is familiar and conversational, but they contain some superior lines. The whole shows smoothness of metre, extensive knowledge, and abundance of images. Its natural unsuitability and unpopularity have caused it to be neglected, but it is useful as an example of "poetical ratiocination."

13. *Britannia Rediviva*, p. 85. Remarkable for extravagant flattery and lack of political foresight.

14. Translation of Juvenal, p. 87. Preserves the wit but lacks the dignity of the original.

15. Translation of Virgil, pp. 87-9. "The most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language" (Pope). Attacked by Milbourne. Imitated by many, but not often with success. It will bear the test of being judged by its general effects and ultimate result, for in spite of small defects it "keeps the mind in pleasing captivity."

16. *Fables*, p. 89. These are renovations of some of Chaucer's Tales.

17. *Alexander's Feast*, p. 90. Exhibits the highest flight of fancy and the most exact nicety of art. Stands without a rival. Was produced in a fortnight.

18: General survey of Dryden's labours, pp. 91-100.

i. *His Mind*: comprehensive by nature, enriched with knowledge; a strong reason, a vigorous genius, but not a quick sensibility; unacquainted with simple, ingenuous passions.

*Love*: pure, disinterested love did not arouse his  
 ties; he looked on it as a means or a result of  
 other passions, such as rivalry, ambition, or revenge.

i. *Pathos*: rare in his works; simplicity he despised;  
 there had no attractions for him.

ii. *Motives*: to fill the ear; to captivate an audience;  
 to show learning; to engage in disputation and to  
 prolong the argument.

iii. *Comedy*: he was not naturally qualified for this;  
 his jests are those of action rather than of sentiment,  
 and humour is acquired by imitation.

iv. *Extravagant imagery*: he approached absurdity,  
 and wrote lines which are almost devoid of meaning.  
 (Johnson gives examples.) These bursts of magnificent  
 extravagance pleased his audience and himself, though  
 he could not approve of them.

v. *Less noble faults*: frequent use of mythology and  
 its connection with religion; pedantic display of  
 knowledge; meanness or confusion of metaphors; vanity  
 in use of French words; negligence in composition, and  
 neglect to correct and revise his work.

vi. *Versification*: described in a triplet by Pope. He  
 published the use of Triplets and Alexandrines. His  
 verses are rarely open to objection. He enriched his  
 language with a greater variety of models than any other  
 author.

19. Dryden's observations on Tragedy, pp. 100-8.

20. Original letter from Dryden to his sons, pp.  
 3-10.

## JOHNSON'S LIFE OF DRYDEN.

1631-1701.

Of the great poet whose life I am about to delineate, the curiosity which his reputation must excite will require a display more ample than can now be given. His contemporaries, however they revered his genius, left his life unwritten, and nothing therefore can be known beyond what casual mention and uncertain tradition have supplied.

John Dryden was born August 9, 1631, at Aldwincle, near Oundle, the son of Erasmus Dryden of Tichmarsh, who was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, Baronet, of Canons Ashby. All these places are in Northamptonshire; but the 10 original stock of the family was in the county of Huntingdon.

He is reported by his last biographer, Derrick, to have inherited from his father an estate of two hundred a year, and to have been bred, as was said, an Anabaptist. For either of these particulars no authority is given. Such a fortune ought to have secured him from that poverty which seems always to have oppressed him, or if he had wasted it, to have made him ashamed of publishing his necessities. But though he had many enemies, who undoubtedly examined his life with a scrutiny sufficiently malicious, I do 20 not remember that he is ever charged with waste of his patrimony. He was indeed sometimes reproached for his first religion. I am therefore inclined to believe that Derrick's intelligence was partly true, and partly erroneous.

From Westminster School, where he was instructed as one of the king's scholars by Dr. Busby, whom he long after continued to reverence, he was in 1650 elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge.

Of his school performances has appeared only a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, composed with great ambition of such conceits as, notwithstanding the reformation begun by Waller and Denham, the example of Cowley still kept in reputation. Lord Hastings died of the small-pox, and his  
 10 poet has made of the pustules first rosebuds, and then gems; at last exalts them into stars; and says,

No comet need foretell his change drew on,  
 Whose corps might seem a constellation.

✓ At the university he does not appear to have been eager of poetical distinction, or to have lavished his early wit either on fictitious subjects or public occasions. He probably considered that he who purposed to be an author, ought first to be a student. He obtained, whatever was the reason, no fellowship in the college. Why he was excluded  
 20 cannot now be known, and it is vain to guess; had he thought himself injured, he knew how to complain. In the Life of Plutarch he mentions his education in the college with gratitude; but in a prologue at Oxford, he has these lines:

Oxford to him a dearer name shall be  
 Than his own mother-university;  
 Thebes did his rude, unknowing youth engage;  
 He chooses Athens in his riper age.

It was not till the death of Cromwell, in 1658, that he  
 30 became a public candidate for fame, by publishing Heroic Stanzas on the late Lord Protector; which, compared with the verses of Sprat and Waller on the same occasion, were sufficient to raise great expectations of the rising poet.

When the king was restored, Dryden, like the other panegyrist of usurpation, changed his opinion, or his profession, and published *Astrea Redux*; a poem on the happy restora-

tion and return of his most sacred Majesty King Charles the Second.

The reproach of inconstancy was, on this occasion, shared with such numbers, that it produced neither hatred nor disgrace! If he changed, he changed with the nation. It was, however, not totally forgotten when his reputation raised him enemies.

The same year he praised the new king in a second poem on his restoration. In the *Astrea* was the line,

An horrid *stulness* first invades the ear,  
And in that silence we a tempest fear—

10

for which he was persecuted with perpetual ridicule, perhaps with more than was deserved. *Silence* is indeed mere privation; and, so considered, cannot *invade*; but privation likewise certainly is *darkness*, and probably *cold*, yet poetry has never been refused the right of ascribing effects or agency to them as to positive powers. No man scruples to say that *darkness* hinders him from his work; or that *cold* has killed the plants. Death is also privation; yet who has made any difficulty of assigning to Death a dart 20 and the power of striking?

In settling the order of his works there is some difficulty; for, even when they are important enough to be formally offered to a patron, he does not commonly date his dedication; the time of writing and publishing is not always the same; nor can the first editions be easily found, if even from them could be obtained the necessary information.

The time at which his first play was exhibited is not certainly known, because it was not printed till it was, some years afterwards, altered and revived; but since the 30 plays are said to be printed in the order in which they were written, from the dates of some, those of others may be inferred, and thus it may be collected, that in 1663, in the thirty-second year of his life, he commenced a writer for the

never to have loved that exercise of his genius, or to have much pleased himself with his own dramas.

Of the stage, when he had once invaded it, he kept possession for many years; not indeed without the competition of rivals who sometimes prevailed, or the censure of critics, which was often poignant and often just; but with such a degree of reputation as made him at least secure of being heard, whatever might be the final determination of the public.

- His first piece was a comedy called the *Wild Gallant*.  
 10 He began with no happy auguries; for his performance was so much disapproved, that he was compelled to recall it, and change it from its imperfect state to the form in which it now appears, and which is yet sufficiently defective to vindicate the critics.

- I wish that there were no necessity of following the progress of his theatrical fame, or tracing the meanders of his mind through the whole series of his dramatic performances; it will be fit, however, to enumerate them, and to take especial notice of those that are distinguished by any  
 20 peculiarity, intrinsic or concomitant; for the composition and fate of eight-and-twenty dramas include too much of a poetical life to be omitted.

In 1664 he published the *Rival Ladies*, which he dedicated to the Earl of Orrery a man of high reputation both as a writer and a statesman. In this play he made his essay of dramatic rhyme, which he defends, in his dedication, with sufficient certainty of a favourable hearing; for Orrery was himself a writer of rhyming tragedies.

- He then joined with Sir Robert Howard in the *Indian Queen*, a tragedy in rhyme. The parts which either of them  
 30 wrote are not distinguished.

The *Indian Emperor* was published in 1667. It is a tragedy in rhyme, intended for a sequel to Howard's *Indian Queen*. Of this connection notice was given to the audience by printed bills, distributed at the door; an expedient supposed to be ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*, when Bayes tells

how many reams he has printed, to instil into the audience some conception of his plot.

In this play is the description of Night, which Rymer has made famous by preferring it to those of all other poets.

The practice of making tragedies in rhyme was introduced soon after the Restoration, as it seems by the Earl of Orrery, in compliance with the opinion of Charles the Second, who had formed his taste by the French theatre; and Dryden, who wrote, and made no difficulty of declaring that he wrote, *only to please, and who perhaps knew that by his dexterity* 10 of versification he was more likely to excel others in rhyme than without it, very readily adopted his master's preference. He therefore made rhyming tragedies, till, by the prevalence of manifest propriety, he seems to have grown ashamed of making them any longer.

To this play is prefixed a very vehement defence of dramatic rhyme, in confutation of the preface to the Duke of Lerma, in which Sir Robert Howard had censured it.

In 1667 he published *Annus Mirabilis*, the Year of Wonders, which may be esteemed one of his most elaborate 20 works.

It is addressed to Sir Robert Howard by a letter, which is not properly a dedication, and, writing to a poet, he has interspersed many critical observations, of which some are common, and some perhaps ventured without much consideration. He began, even now, to exercise the domination of conscious genius, by recommending his own performance. "I am satisfied that as the Prince and General [Rupert and Monk] are incomparably the best subjects I ever had, so what I have written on them is much better than what I 30 have performed on any other. As I have endeavoured to adorn my poem with noble thoughts, so much more to express those thoughts with elocution."

It is written in quatrains, or heroic stanzas of four lines; a measure which he had learned from the Gondibert of Davenant, and which he then thought the most magnificent

that the English language affords. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances, increased as they were by the exactness which the age required. It was, throughout his life, very much his custom to recommend his works by representation of the difficulties that he had encountered, without appearing to have sufficiently considered, that where there is no difficulty there is no praise.

There seems to be, in the conduct of Sir Robert Howard and Dryden towards each other, something that is not now  
 10 easily to be explained. Dryden, in his dedication to the Earl of Orrery, had defended dramatic rhyme; and Howard, in the preface to a collection of plays, had censured his opinion. Dryden vindicated himself in his Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry: Howard, in his preface to the Duke of Lerma, animadverted on the Vindication; and Dryden, in a preface to the Indian Emperor, replied to the Animad-  
 20 versions with great asperity, and almost with contumely. The dedication to this play is dated the year in which the *Annus Mirabilis* was published. Here appears a strange  
 inconsistency; but Langbaine affords some help, by relating that the answer to Howard was not published in the first edition of the play, but was added when it was afterwards reprinted; and as the Duke of Lerma did not appear till 1668, the same year in which the dialogue was published, there was time enough for enmity to grow up between authors, who, writing both for the theatre, were naturally rivals.

He was now so much distinguished, that in 1668 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. The salary of  
 30 the laureat had been raised in favour of Jonson, by Charles the First, from an hundred marks to one hundred pounds a year and a tierce of wine; a revenue in those days not inadequate to the conveniences of life.

The same year, he published his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, an elegant and instructive dialogue, in which we are told, by Prior, that the principal character is meant to represent the

Duke of Dorset. This work seems to have given Addison a model for his *Dialogues upon Medals*.

*Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen* (1668), is a tragic-comedy. In the preface he discusses a curious question, whether a poet can judge well of his own productions? and determines very justly, that, of the plan and disposition, and all that can be reduced to principles of science, the author may depend upon his own opinion; but that, in those parts where fancy predominates, self-love may easily deceive. He might have observed that what is good only because it pleases, cannot be pronounced good till it has been found to please.

*Sir Martin Marall* (1668) is a comedy, published without preface or dedication, and at first without the name of the author. Langbaine charges it, like most of the rest, with plagiarism; and observes, that the song is translated from Voiture, allowing however that both the sense and measure are exactly observed.

*The Tempest* (1670) is an alteration of Shakspeare's play, made by Dryden in conjunction with Davenant, 20 "whom," says he, "I found of so quick a fancy, that nothing was proposed to him in which he could not suddenly produce a thought extremely pleasant and surprising, and those first thoughts of his, contrary to the Latin proverb, were not always the least happy; and as his fancy was quick, so likewise were the products of it remote and new. He borrowed not of any other; and his imaginations were such as could not easily enter into any other man."

The effect produced by the conjunction of these two powerful minds was, that to Shakspeare's monster, Caliban, 30 is added a sister-monster, Sycorax; and a woman, who, in the original play, had never seen a man, is in this brought acquainted with a man that had never seen a woman.

About this time, in 1673, Dryden seems to have had his quiet much disturbed by the success of the *Empress of Morocco*, a tragedy written in rhyme by Elkanah Settle,

which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the  
10 play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

Of Settle he gives this character: "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he  
20 makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly."

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails most over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his Villain, and his Sub-villain, nay his Hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and  
30 something of the Elkanah will be visible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet:

To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,  
Which, back'd with thunder, do but gild a storm.

*Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning; lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must gild a storm. Now, if I must conform my smiles to lightning, then my smiles must gild a storm too: to gild with smiles is a new invention of gilding. And gild a storm by being backed with thunder. Thunder is part of the storm; so one part of the storm must help to gild another part, and help by backing; as if a man would gild a thing the better for being backed, or having a load upon his back. So that here is gilding by conforming, 10 smiling, lightning, backing, and thundering. The whole is as if I should say thus I will make my counterfeit smiles look like a flattering stone-horse, which, being backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle I am mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once."*

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen, but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify 20 curiosity to quote it more largely

"Where'er she bleeds,  
He so severer a damnation needs,  
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,  
Than the infection that attends that breath.

*That attends that breath* —The poet is at *breath* again *breath* can never 'scape him, and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*, that is, she must be executed first, and sentenced after; and the *pronouncing* of this *sentence* will be *infectious*; that is, others will catch the disease of that sentence, and this infecting of others will torment a man: self. The whole is thus: *when she bleeds, thou needest no greater hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by*

which was so much applauded, as to make him think his supremacy of reputation in some danger. Settle had not only been prosperous on the stage, but, in the confidence of success, had published his play, with sculptures and a preface of defiance. Here was one offence added to another; and, for the last blast of inflammation, it was acted at Whitehall by the court-ladies.

Dryden could not now repress these emotions, which he called indignation, and others jealousy; but wrote upon the play and the dedication such criticism as malignant impatience could pour out in haste.

Of Settle he gives this character: "He's an animal of a most deplored understanding, without conversation. His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. The little talent which he has, is fancy. He sometimes labours with a thought; but, with the pudder he makes to bring it into the world, 'tis commonly still-born; so that, for want of learning and elocution, he will never be able to express any thing either naturally or justly."

This is not very decent; yet this is one of the pages in which criticism prevails most over brutal fury. He proceeds: "He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. Fools they will be in spite of him. His King, his two Empresses, his Villain, and his Sub-villain, nay his Hero, have all a certain natural cast of the father—their folly was born and bred in them, and something of the Elkanah will be visible."

This is Dryden's general declamation; I will not withhold from the reader a particular remark. Having gone through the first act, he says, "To conclude this act with the most rumbling piece of nonsense spoken yet:

To flattering lightning our feign'd smiles conform,  
Which, back'd with thunder, do but gild a storm.

*Conform a smile to lightning, make a smile imitate lightning, and flattering lightning; lightning sure is a threatening thing. And this lightning must gild a storm. Now, if I must conform my smiles to lightning, then my smiles must gild a storm too. to gild with smiles is a new invention of gilding. And gild a storm by being backed with thunder. Thunder is part of the storm, so one part of the storm must help to gild another part, and help by backing; as if a man would gild a thing the better for being backed, or having a load upon his back. So that here is gilding by conforming, 10 smiling, lightning, backing, and thundering. The whole is as if I should say thus. I will make my counterfeited smiles look like a flattering stone-horse, which, being backed with a trooper, does but gild the battle. I am mistaken if nonsense is not here pretty thick sown. Sure the poet writ these two lines aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once."*

Here is perhaps a sufficient specimen, but as the pamphlet, though Dryden's, has never been thought worthy of republication, and is not easily to be found, it may gratify 20 curiosity to quote it more largely

"When'er she bleeds,  
He no severer a damnation needs,  
That dares pronounce the sentence of her death,  
Than the infection that attends that breath.

*That attends that breath* —The poet is at *breath* again, *breath* can never 'scape him, and here he brings in a *breath* that must be *infectious* with *pronouncing* a sentence; and this sentence is not to be pronounced till the condemned party *bleeds*; that is, she must be executed first, and 30 sentenced after; and the pronouncing of this sentence will be infectious; that is, others will catch the disease of that sentence, and thus infecting of others will torment a man's self. The whole is thus. *when she bleeds, thou needest no greater hell or torment to thyself, than infecting of others by*

*pronouncing a sentence upon her.* What hodge-podge does he make here ! Never was Dutch grout such clogging, thick, indigestible stuff. But this is but a taste to stay the stomach ; we shall have a more plentiful mess presently.

"Now to dish up the poet's broth that I promised ;

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarged,  
Of nature's grosser burden we're discharged,  
Then, gentle as a happy lover's sigh,  
Like wand'ring meteors through the air we'll fly,  
10 And, in our airy walk, as subtle guests,  
We'll steal into our cruel fathers' breasts,  
There read their souls, and track each passion's sphere ;  
See how Revenge moves there, Ambition here ;  
And in their orbs view the dark characters  
Of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars.  
We'll blot out all these hideous draughts, and write  
Pure and white forms ; then with a radiant light  
Their breasts encircle, till their passions be  
Gentle as nature in its infancy ;  
20 Till, soften'd by our charms, their furies cease,  
And their revenge resolves into a peace.  
Thus by our death their quarrel ends,  
Whom living we made foes, dead we'll make friends.

If this be not a very liberal mess, I will refer myself to the stomach of any moderate guest. And a rare mess it is, far excelling any Westminster white-broth. It is a kind of giblet porridge, made of the giblets of a couple of young geese, stodged full of *meteors, orbs, spheres, track, hideous draughts, dark characters, white forms, and radiant lights,*  
30 designed not only to please appetite, and indulge luxury, but it is also physical, being an approved medicine, for it is propounded, by Morena, as a receipt to cure their fathers of their cholerick humours ; and, were it written in characters as barbarous as the words, might very well pass for a doctor's bill. To conclude : it is porridge, 'tis a receipt, 'tis I know not what : for, certainly, never anyone that pretended to write sense had the impudence before to put such stuff as

this into the mouths of those that were to speak it before an audience, whom he did not take to be all fools; and after that to print it too, and expose it to the examination of the world. But let us see what we can make of this stuff.

For when we're dead, and our freed souls enlarged—

Here he tells us what it is to be *dead*; it is to have *our freed souls set free*. Now, if to have a soul set free, is to be dead; then to have a *freed soul* set free, is to have a dead man die.

Then, gentle as a happy lover's sigh—

'They two like one *sigh*, and that one *sigh* like two wandering meteors,

—Shall fly through the air—

That is, they shall mount above like falling stars, or else they shall skip like two Jacks with lanthorns, or Will with a wisp, and Madge with a candle.

"*And in their airy walk steal into their cruel fathers' breasts, like subtle guests. So that their fathers' breasts must be in an airy walk, an airy walk of a flier. And there they will read their souls, and track the spheres of their passions* That is, these walking fliers, Jack with a lanthorn, etc, will put on his spectacles, and fall a *reading souls*, and put on his pumps, and fall a *tracking of spheres* so that he will read and run, walk and fly, at the same time! Oh! Nimble Jack! *Then he will see, how revenge here, how ambition there*—The birds will hop about. *And then view the dark characters of sieges, ruins, murders, blood, and wars, in their orbs Track the characters to their forms!* Oh! rare sport for Jack! *Never was place so full of game as these breasts! You cannot stir, but flush a sphere, start a character, or unkennel an orb!*"

Settle's is said to have been the first play embellished with

"The poet has not only been so imprudent to expose all this stuff, but so arrogant to defend it with an epistle ; like a saucy booth-keeper, that, when he had put a cheat upon the people, would wrangle and fight with any that would not like it, or would offer to discover it ; for which arrogance our poet receives this correction ; and, to jerk him a little the sharper, I will not transpose his verse, but by the help of his own words trans-non-sense sense, that, by my stuff; people may judge the better what his is :

- 10      Great Boy, thy tragedy and sculptures done  
           From press, and plates in fleets do homeward come :  
           And, in ridiculous and humble pride,  
           Their course in ballad-singers' baskets guide,  
           Whose greasy twigs do all new beauties take,  
           From the gay shows thy dainty sculptures make.  
           Thy lines a mess of rhyming nonsense yield,  
           A senseless tale, with flattering fustian fill'd.  
           No grain of sense does in one line appear,  
           Thy words big bulks of boisterous bombast bear.
- 20      With noise they move, and from players' mouths rebound,  
           When their tongues dance to thy words' empty sound.  
           By thee inspired the rumbling verses roll,  
           As if that rhyme and bombast lent a soul :  
           And with that soul they seem taught duty too,  
           To huffing words does humble nonsense bow,  
           As if it would thy worthless worth enhance,  
           To th' lowest rank of fops thy praise advance ;  
           To whom, by instinct, all thy stuff is dear :  
           Their loud claps echo to the theatre.
- 30      From breaths of fools thy commendation spreads,  
           Fame sings thy praise with mouths of logger-heads.  
           With noise and laughing each thy fustian greets,  
           'Tis clapt by quires of empty-headed cits,  
           Who have their tribute sent, and homage given,  
           As men in whispers send loud noise to Heaven.

"Thus I have daubed him with his own puddle : and now we are come from aboard his dancing, masking, rebounding, breathing fleet ; and, as if we had landed at Gotham, we meet nothing but fools and nonsense."

Such was the criticism to which the genius of Dryden could be reduced, between rage and terror; rage with little provocation, and terror with little danger. To see the highest mind thus levelled with the meanest may produce some solace to the consciousness of weakness, and some mortification to the pride of wisdom. But let it be remembered, that minds are not levelled in their powers but when they are first levelled in their desires. Dryden and Settle had both placed their happiness in the claps of multitude.

An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer, a comedy 10 (1671), is dedicated to the illustrious Duke of Newcastle, whom he courts by adding to his praises those of his lady, not only as a lover but a partner of his studies. It is *unpleasant to think how many names, once celebrated, are since forgotten*. Of Newcastle's works nothing is now known but his Treatise on Horsemanship.

The Preface seems very elaborately written, and contains many just remarks on the Fathers of the English drama. Shakspeare's plots, he says, are in the hundred novels of Cuthno; those of Beaumont and Fletcher in Spanish Stories, 20 Jonson only made them for himself. His criticisms upon tragedy, comedy, and farce, are judicious and profound. He endeavours to defend the immorality of some of his comedies by the example of former writers, which is only to say that he was not the first nor perhaps the greatest offender. Against those that accused him of plagiarism he alleges a favourable expression of the king "He only desired that they who accuse me of thefts, would steal him plays like mine"; and then relates how much labour he spends in sitting for the English stage what he borrows from others. 30

Tyrannic Love, or the Virgin Martyr (1672), was another tragedy in rhyme, conspicuous for many passages of strength and elegance, and many of empty noise and ridiculous turbulence. The rants of Maximin have been always the sport of criticism; and were at length (1691), in his own confession

Of this play he takes care to let the reader know, that it was contrived and written in seven weeks. Want of time was often his excuse, or perhaps shortness of time was his private boast in the form of an apology.

It was written before the Conquest of Granada, but published after it. The design is to recommend piety. "I considered that pleasure was not the only end of Poesy; and that even the instructions of morality were not so wholly the business of a poet, as that precepts and examples of  
10 piety were to be omitted; for to leave that employment altogether to the clergy, were to forget that religion was first taught in verse, which the laziness or dulness of succeeding priesthood turned afterwards into prose." Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not show his malice to the parsons.

The two parts of the Conquest of Granada (1672), are written with a seeming determination to glut the public with dramatic wonders, to exhibit in its highest elevation a theatrical meteor of incredible love and impossible valour,  
20 and to leave no room for a wilder flight to the extravagance of posterity. All the rays of romantic heat, whether amorous or warlike, glow in Almanzor by a kind of concentration. He is above all laws; he is exempt from all restraints; he ranges the world at will, and governs wherever he appears. He fights without inquiring the cause, and loves in spite of the obligations of justice, of rejection by his mistress, and of prohibition from the dead. Yet the scenes are, for the most part, delightful; they exhibit a kind of illustrious depravity, and majestic madness, such as,  
30 if it is sometimes despised, is often revered, and in which the ridiculous is mingled with the astonishing.

In the epilogue to the second part of the Conquest of Granada, Dryden indulges his favourite pleasure of discrediting his predecessors; and this epilogue he has defended by a long postscript. He had promised a second dialogue, in which he should more fully treat of the virtues and faults

of the English poets, who have written in the dramatic, epic, or lyric way. This promise was never formally performed; but, with respect to the dramatic writers, he has given us in his prefaces and in this postscript, something equivalent; but his purpose being to exalt himself by the comparison, he shows faults distinctly, and only praises excellence in general terms.

A play thus written, in professed defiance of probability, naturally drew down upon itself the vultures of the theatre. One of the critics that attacked it was Martin Clifford, to 10 whom Sprat addressed the *Life of Cowley*, with such veneration of his critical-powers as might naturally excite great expectations of instruction from his remarks. But let honest credulity beware of receiving characters from contemporary writers. Clifford's remarks, by the favour of Dr. Percy, were at last obtained, and, that no man may ever want them more, I will extract enough to satisfy all reasonable desire.

In the first letter his observation is only general "You do live," says he, "in as much ignorance and darkness as you did in the womb, your writings are like a Jack-of-all-trades' shop; they have a variety, but nothing of value; and if thou art not the dullest plant-animal that ever the earth produced, all that I have conversed with are strangely mistaken in thee."

In the second he tells him that Almanzor is not more copied from Achilles than from Ancient Pistol. "But I am," says he, "strangely mistaken if I have not seen this very Almanzor of yours in some disguise about this town, and passing under another name. Prythee tell me true, 30 was not this Hufcap once the Indian Emperor? and at another time did he not call himself Maximin? Was not Lyndaraxa once called Almeira? I mean under Montezuma the Indian Emperor I protest and vow they are either the same, or so alike that I cannot, for my heart, distinguish one from the other You are therefore a strange

unconscionable thief ; thou art not content to steal from others, but dost rob thy poor wretched self too."

Now was Settle's time to take his revenge. He wrote a vindication of his own lines ; and, if he is forced to yield anything, makes reprisals upon his enemy. To say that his answer is equal to the censure, is no high commendation. To expose Dryden's method of analyzing his expressions, he tries the same experiment upon the description of the ships in the Indian Emperor, of which however he does not deny the excellence ; but intends to show, that by studied misconstruction everything may be equally represented as ridiculous. After so much of Dryden's elegant animadversions, justice requires that something of Settle's should be exhibited. The following observations are therefore extracted from a quarto pamphlet of ninety-five pages :

"Fate after him below with pain did move,  
And victory could scarce keep pace above.

These two lines, if he can show me any sense or thought in, or anything but bombast and noise, he shall make me believe every word in his observations on Morocco sense.

"In the Empress of Morocco were these lines :

I'll travel then to some remoter sphere,  
Till I find out new worlds, and crown you there—

on which Dryden made this remark : ' I believe our learned author takes a sphere for a country ; the sphere of Morocco ! as if Morocco were the globe of earth and water ; but a globe is no sphere neither, by his leave,' etc. So *sphere* must not be sense, unless it relate to a circular motion about a globe, in which sense the astronomers use it. I would desire him to expound those lines in Granada :

I'll to the turrets of the palace go,  
And add new fire to those that fight below.  
Thence, hero-like, with torches by my side,  
(Far be the omen tho') my Love I'll guide.

*No, like his better fortune I'll appear,  
With open arms, loose tail, and flowing hair,  
Just flying forward from my rowling sphere.*

I wonder, if he be so strict, how he dares make so bold with *sphere* himself, and be so critical in other men's writings. Fortune is fancied standing on a globe, not on a *sphere*, as he told us in the first act.

"Because *Elkanah's* similes are the most unlike things to what they are compared in the world, I'll venture to start a simile in his *Annus Mirabilis*: he gives this poetical description of the ship called the London

The goodly London in her gallant trim,  
The Phoenix-daughter of the vanquish'd old,  
Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,  
And on her shadow rides in floating gold.  
*Her flag aloft spread rustling in the wind,*  
And sanguine streamers seem'd the flood to fire:  
The weaver, charm'd with what his loom design'd,  
Goes on to sea, and knows not to retire  
With roomy decks her guns of mighty strength,  
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,  
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,  
*She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves*

20

What a wonderful pother is here, to make all these poetical beautifications of a ship, that is, a *phoenix* in the first stanza, and but a *wasp* in the last nay, to make his humble comparison of a *wasp* more ridiculous, he does not say it flies upon the waves as nimbly as a wasp, or the like, but it seem'd a *wasp*. But our author at the writing of this was not in his altitudes, to compare ships to floating palaces, 30 a comparison to the purpose was a perfection he did not arrive to till his Indian Emperor's days. But perhaps his similitude has more in it than we imagine; this ship had a great many guns in her, and they, put all together, made the sting in the wasp's tail for this is all the reason I can guess, why it seem'd a *wasp*. But, because we will

allow him all we can to help out, let it be a *phenix sea-wasp*, and the rarity of such an animal may do much towards heightening the fancy.

"It had been much more to his purpose, if he had designed to render the senseless play little, to have searched for some such pedantry as this :

- Two ifs scarce makes one possibility.  
 If justice will take all, and nothing give,  
 Justice, methinks, is not distributive.  
 10 To die or kill you is the alternative.  
 Rather than take your life, I will not live.

"Observe how prettily our author chops logic in heroic verse. Three such fustian canting words as *distributive*, *alternative*, and *two ifs*, no man but himself would have come within the noise of. But he's a man of general learning, and all comes into his play.

"Twould have done well too if he could have met with the rant or two, worth the observation : such as,

- Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,  
 20 Leave months and weeks behind thee in thy race.

"But surely the Sun, whether he flies a lover's or not a lover's pace, leaves weeks and months, nay years too, behind him in his race.

"Poor Robin, or any other of the philo-mathematics, would have given him satisfaction in the point.

- If I could kill thee now, thy fate's so low,  
 That I must stoop ere I can give the blow :  
 But mine is fixt so far above thy crown,  
 That all thy men,  
 30 Piled on thy back, can never pull it down.

"Now where that is, Almanzor's fate is fixed, I cannot guess ; but, wherever it is, I believe Almanzor, and think that all Abdalla's subjects, piled upon one another, might not pull down his fate so well as without piling ; besides, I

think Abdalla so wise a man, that, if Almanzor had told him piling his men upon his back might do the feat, he would scarcely bear such a weight, for the pleasure of the exploit; but it is a huff, and let Abdalla do it if he dare.

The people like a headlong torrent go,  
And every dam they break or overflow.  
But, unopposed, they either lose their force,  
Or wind in volumes to their former course;

a very pretty allusion, contrary to all sense or reason. Torrents, I take it, let them wind never so much, can never return to their former course, unless he can suppose that fountains can go upwards, which is impossible; nay, more, in the foregoing page he tells us so too; a trick of a very unfaithful memory,

But can no more than fountains upward flow;

which of a *torrent*, which signifies a rapid stream, is much more impossible. Besides, if he goes to quibble, and say that it is possible by art water may be made return, and the same water run twice in one and the same channel, then he quite confutes what he says, for it is by being opposed, that it runs into its former course; for all engines that make water so return, do it by compulsion and opposition. Or, if he means a headlong torrent for a tide, which would be ridiculous, yet they do not wind in volumes, but come foreright back (if their upright be straight to their former course), and that by opposition of the sea-water, that drives them back again.

"And for fancy, when he lights of anything like it, 'tis a wonder if it be not borrowed. As here, for example of, I find this fanciful thought in his *Annus Mirabilis*."

Old father Thames rais'd up his reverend head;  
But fear'd the fate of Simois would return;  
Deep in his ooze he sought his sedge bed,  
And shrunk his waters back into his den.

"This is stolen from Cowley's *Dauides*, p. 9.

Swift Jordan started, and straight backward fled,  
Hiding amongst thick reeds his aged head.  
And when the Spaniards their assault begin,  
At once beat those without and those within.

"This Almanzor speaks of himself; and sure for one man to conquer an army within the city, and another without the city, at once, is something difficult: but this flight is pardonable to some we meet with in Granada: Osmin, speaking of  
10 Almanzor,

Who, like a tempest that outrides the wind,  
Made a just battle, ere the bodies join'd.

Pray, what does this honourable person mean by a *tempest that outrides the wind*? a tempest that outrides itself. To suppose a tempest without wind, is as bad as supposing a man to walk without feet; for if he supposes the tempest to be something distinct from the wind, yet, as being the effect of wind only, to come before the cause is a little preposterous; so that, if he takes it one way, or if he takes it the  
20 other, those two *ifs* will scarce make one *possibility*." Enough of Settle.

Marriage Alamode (1673) is a comedy dedicated to the Earl of Rochester, whom he acknowledges not only as the defender of his poetry, but the promoter of his fortune. Langbaine places this play in 1673. The Earl of Rochester, therefore, was the famous Wilmot, whom yet tradition always represents as an enemy to Dryden, and who is mentioned by him with some disrespect in the preface to *Juvenal*.

The *Assiguation*, or *Love in a Nunnery*, a comedy  
30 (1673), was driven off the stage, *against the opinion*, as the author says, *of the best judges*. It is dedicated, in a very elegant address, to Sir Charles Sedley; in which he finds an opportunity for his usual complaint of hard treatment and unreasonable censure.

*Amboyna* (1673) is a tissue of mingled dialogue in verse

and prose, and was perhaps written in less time than *The Virgin Martyr*; though the author thought not fit either ostentatiously or mournfully to tell how little labour it cost him, or at how short a warning he produced it. It was a temporary performance, written in the time of the Dutch war, to inflame the nation against their enemies; to whom he hopes, as he declares in his epilogue, to make his poetry not less destructive than that by which *Tyrtæus* of old animated the Spartans. This play was written in the second Dutch war in 1673.

10

*Troilus and Cressida* (1679) is a play altered from *Shakespeare*; but so altered, that, even in *Langbaine's* opinion, "the last scene in the third act is a master-piece." It is introduced by a discourse "on the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy," to which I suspect that *Rymer's* book had given occasion.

*The Spanish Friar* (1681) is a *tragi-comedy*, eminent for the happy coincidence and coalition of the two plots. As it was written against the papists, it would naturally at that time have friends and enemies, and partly by the popularity which it obtained at first, and partly by the real power both of the serious and risible part, it continued long a favourite of the public.

It was *Dryden's* opinion, at least, for some time, and he maintains it in the dedication of this play, that the drama required an alternation of comic and tragic scenes; and that it is necessary to mitigate by alleviations of merriment the pressure of ponderous events, and the fatigue of toilsome passions. "Whoever," says he, "cannot perform both parts, is but half a writer for the stage."

30

*The Duke of Guise*, a tragedy (1683), written in conjunction with *Lee* as *Ædipus* had been before, seems to deserve notice only for the offence which it gave to the remnant of the Covenanters, and in general to the enemies of the court, who attacked him with great violence, and were answered by him; though at last he seems to withdraw from

the conflict, by transferring the greater part of the blame or merit to his partner. It happened that a contract had been made between them, by which they were to join in writing a play; and "he happened," says Dryden, "to claim the promise just upon the finishing of a poem, when I would have been glad of a little respite. — Two-thirds of it belonged to him; and to me only the first scene of the play, the whole fourth act, and the first half, or somewhat more, of the fifth."

This was a play written professedly for the party of the Duke of York, whose succession was then opposed. A parallel is intended between the Leaguers of France and the Covenanters of England; and this intention produced the controversy.

*Albion and Albanus* (1685) is a musical drama or opera, written, like the *Duke of Guise*, against the Republicans. With what success it was performed, I have not found.

The *State of Innocence and Fall of Man* (1675) is termed by him an opera: it is rather a tragedy in heroic rhyme, but of which the personages are such as cannot decently be exhibited on the stage. Some such production was foreseen by Marvel, who writes thus to Milton:

Or if a work so infinite be spann'd,  
Jealous I was least some less skilful hand  
(Such as disquiet always what is well,  
And by ill-imitating would excel),  
Might hence presume the whole creation's day  
To change in scenes, and show it in a play.

It is another of his hasty productions; for the heat of his imagination raised it in a month.

10 This composition is addressed to the Princess of Modena, then Duchess of York, in a strain of flattery which disgraces genius, and which it was wonderful that any man that knew the meaning of his own words could use without self-detestation. It is an attempt to mingle earth and heaven, by praising human excellence in the language of religion.

The preface contains an apology for heroic verse and

poetic licence; by which is meant not any liberty taken in contracting or extending words, but the use of bold fictions and *ambitious figures*.

The reason which he gives for printing what was never acted cannot be overpassed: "I was induced to it in my own defence, many hundred copies of it being dispersed abroad without my knowledge or consent; and every one gathering new faults, it became at length a libel against me." These copies, as they gathered faults, were apparently manuscript; and he lived in an age very unlike ours, if 10 many hundred copies of fourteen hundred lines were likely to be transcribed. An author has a right to print his own works, and needs not seek an apology in falsehood; but he that could bear to write the dedication felt no pain in writing the preface.

Aureng Zebe (1676) is a tragedy founded on the actions of a great prince then reigning, but over nations not likely to employ their critics upon the transactions of the English stage. If he had known and disliked his own character, our trade was not in those times secure from his resentment. 20 His country is at such a distance, that the manners might be safely falsified, and the incidents feigned, for remoteness of place is remarked, by Racine, to afford the same conveniences to a poet as length of time.

This play is written in rhyme, and has the appearance of being the most elaborate of all the dramas. The personages are imperial; but the dialogue is often domestic, and therefore susceptible of sentiments accommodated to familiar incidents. The complaint of life is celebrated; and there are many other passages that may be read with pleasure. 30

The play is addressed to the Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, himself, if not a poet, yet a writer of verses, and a critic. In this address Dryden gave the first hints of his intention to write an epic poem. He mentions his design in terms so obscure, that he seems afraid lest his plan should be purloined, as, he says, happened to him when

he told it more plainly in his preface to *Juvenal*. "The design," says he, "you know is great, the story English, and neither too near the present times, nor too distant from them."

All for *Love, or the World well Lost* (1678), a tragedy founded upon the story of Antony and Cleopatra, he tells us, "is the only play which he wrote for himself": the rest were given to the people. It is by universal consent accounted the work in which he has admitted the fewest  
 10 improprieties of style or character; but it has one fault equal to many, though rather moral than critical, that, by admitting the romantic omnipotence of love, he has recommended, as laudable and worthy of imitation, that conduct which, through all ages, the good have censured as vicious, and the bad despised as foolish.

Of this play the prologue and the epilogue, though written upon the common topics of malicious and ignorant criticism, and without any particular relation to the characters or incidents of the drama, are deservedly celebrated for their  
 20 elegance and sprightliness.

*Limberham, or the Kind Keeper* (1680), is a comedy, which, after the third night, was prohibited as too indecent for the stage. What gave offence, was in the printing, as the author says, altered or omitted. Dryden confesses that its indecency was objected to; but Langbaine, who yet seldom favours him, imputes its expulsion to resentment, because it "so much exposed the keeping part of the town."

*Œdipus* (1679) is a tragedy formed by Dryden and Lee, in conjunction, from the works of Sophocles, Seneca, and  
 30 Corneille. Dryden planned the scenes, and composed the first and third acts.

*Don Sebastian* (1690) is commonly esteemed either the first or second of his dramatic performances. It is too long to be all acted, and has many characters and many incidents; and though it is not without sallies of frantic dignity, and more noise than meaning, yet, as it makes approaches to the

possibilities of real life, and has some sentiments which leave a strong impression, it continued long to attract attention. Amidst the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empire, are inserted several scenes which the writer intended for come, but which, I suppose, that age did not much commend, and this would not endure. There are, however, passages of excellence universally acknowledged; the dispute and the reconciliation of Dorax and Sebastian has always been admired.

This play was first acted in 1690, after Dryden had for some years discontinued dramatic poetry.

*Amphitryon* is a comedy derived from Plautus and Molière. The dedication is dated Oct. 1690. This play seems to have succeeded at its first appearance; and was, I think, long considered as a very diverting entertainment.

*Cleomenes* (1692) is a tragedy, only remarkable as it occasioned an incident related in the *Guardian*, and allusively mentioned by Dryden in his preface. As he came out from the representation, he was accosted thus by some airy strippling "Had I been left alone with a young beauty, I would not have spent my time like your Spartan" "That, sir," said Dryden, "perhaps is true, but give me leave to tell you, that you are no hero."

*King Arthur* (1691) is another opera. It was the last work that Dryden performed for King Charles, who did not live to see it exhibited, and it does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage. In the dedication to the Marquis of Halifax, there is a very elegant character of Charles, and a pleasing account of his latter life. When this was first brought upon the stage, news that the Duke of Monmouth had landed was told in the theatre, upon which the company departed, and *Arthur* was exhibited no more.

His last drama was *Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy. In his dedication to the Earl of Salisbury he mentions "the lowness of fortune to which he has voluntarily reduced himself, and of which he has no reason to be ashamed."

This play appeared in 1694. It is said to have been unsuccessful. The catastrophe, proceeding merely from a change of mind, is confessed by the author to be defective. Thus he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success.

- From such a number of theatrical pieces, it will be supposed, by most readers, that he must have improved his fortune; at least, that such diligence with such abilities must have set penury at defiance. But in Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation  
 10 which it has now obtained. The playhouse was abhorred by the Puritans, and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity, and a young trader would have impaired his credit, by appearing in those mansions of dissolute licentiousness. The profits of the theatre, when so many classes of the people were deducted from the audience, were not great; and the poet had, for a long time, but a single night. The first that had two nights was Southern; and the first that had three was Rowe.  
 20 There were, however, in those days, arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise; and a play therefore seldom produced him more than a hundred pounds, by the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy.

- Almost every piece had a dedication, written with such elegance and luxuriance of praise, as neither haughtiness nor avarice could be imagined able to resist. But he seems to have made flattery too cheap. That praise is worth nothing of which the price is known.  
 30 To increase the value of his copies, he often accompanied his work with a preface of criticism; a kind of learning then almost new in the English language, and which he, who had considered with great accuracy the principles of writing, was able to distribute copiously as occasions arose. By these dissertations the public judgment must have been much improved; and Swift, who conversed with Dryden,

relates that he regretted the success of his own instructions, and found his readers made suddenly too skilful to be easily satisfied.

His prologues had such reputation, that for some time a play was considered as less likely to be well received, if some of his verses did not introduce it. The price of a prologue was two guineas, till, being asked to write one for Mr Southern, he demanded three; "Not," said he, "young man, out of disrespect to you, but the players have had my goods too cheap."

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Though he declares, that in his own opinion his genius was not dramatic, he had great confidence in his own fertility; for he is said to have engaged, by contract, to furnish four plays a year

It is certain that in one year, 1678, he published *All for Love*, *Assignment*, two parts of the *Conquest of Granada*, *Sir Martin Marall*, and the *State of Innocence*, six complete plays, with a celerity of performance, which, though all Langbaine's charges of plagiarism should be allowed, shows such facility of composition, such readiness of language, 20 and such copiousness of sentiment, as, since the time of Lopez de Vega, perhaps no other author has possessed

He did not enjoy his reputation, however great, nor his profits, however small, without molestation. He had critics to endure, and rivals to oppose. The two most distinguished wits of the nobility, the Duke of Buckingham and Earl of Rochester, declared themselves his enemies.

Buckingham characterized him, in 1671, by the name of *Bayes* in the *Rehearsal* a farce which he is said to have written with the assistance of Butler, the author of *Hudibras*; Martin Clifford, of the Charter-house; and Dr Sprat, the friend of Cowley, then his chaplain. Dryden and his friends laughed at the length of time, and the number of hands employed upon this performance, in which, though by some artifice of action it yet keeps possession of the stage, it is not possible now to find anything that might not

have been written without so long delay, or a confederacy so numerous.

To adjust the minute events of literary history is tedious and troublesome ; it requires indeed no great force of understanding, but often depends upon inquiries which there is no opportunity of making, or is to be fetched from books and pamphlets not always at hand.

The Rehearsal was played in 1671, and yet is represented as ridiculing passages in the Conquest of Granada and Assignment, which were not published till 1678, in Marriage à la mode, published in 1673, and in Tyrannic Love, of 1677. These contradictions show how rashly satire is applied.

It is said that this farce was originally intended against Davenant, who, in the first draught, was characterized by the name of Bilboa. Davenant had been a soldier and an adventurer.

There is one passage in the Rehearsal still remaining, which seems to have related originally to Davenant. Bayes hurts his nose, and comes in with brown paper applied to the bruise ; how this affected Dryden, does not appear. Davenant's nose had suffered such diminution, that a patch upon that part evidently denoted him.

It is said likewise that Sir Robert Howard was once meant. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be.

Much of the personal satire, to which it might owe its first reception, is now lost or obscured. Bayes probably imitated the dress, and mimicked the manner, of Dryden ; the cant words which are so often in his mouth may be supposed to have been Dryden's habitual phrases, or customary exclamations. Bayes, when he is to write, is blooded and purged ; this, as Lamotte relates himself to have heard, was the real practice of the poet.

There were other strokes in the Rehearsal by which malice was gratified ; the debate between Love and Honour, which keeps Prince Volscius in a single boot, is said to

alluded to the misconduct of the Duke of Ormond, who had lost Dublin to the rebels while he was toying with a French princess.

The Earl of Rochester, to suppress the reputation of Dryden, took Settle into his protection, and endeavoured to mislead the public that its approbation had been to that poet misplaced. Settle was a while in high reputation; his *Conquest of Morocco*, having first delighted the town (1673), was carried in triumph to Whitehall, and played by the lords of the court. Now was the poetical meteor at the height: the next moment began its fall. Rochester withdrew his patronage; seeming resolved, says one of his biographers, "to have a judgement contrary to that of the public", perhaps being unable to endure any reputation beyond a certain height, even when he had himself contributed to raise it.

Neither critics nor rivals did Dryden much mischief, unless he gained from his own temper the power of vexing him, by his frequent bursts of resentment gave reason to suspect. He is always angry at some past, or afraid of the future censure, but he lessens the smart of his wounds by the balm of his own approbation, and endeavours to repel the shafts of criticism by opposing a shield of adamant silence.

The perpetual accusation produced against him was that of plagiarism, against which he never attempted any vigorous defence; for though he was perhaps sometimes injuriously charged, he would, by denying part of the charge, have convinced the rest; and, as his adversaries had the proof in their own hands, he, who knew that wit had little power against facts, wisely left, in that perplexity which generality creates, a question which it was his interest to suppress, and which, unless provoked by vindication, few were likely to examine.

Though the life of a writer, from about thirty-five to fifty-three, may be supposed to have been sufficiently busied

by the composition of eight-and-twenty pieces for the stage. Dryden found room in the same space for many other undertakings.

But how much soever he wrote, he was at least once suspected of writing more; for in 1679, a paper of verses, called *An Essay on Satire*, was shown about in manuscript, by which the Earl of Rochester, the Duchess of Portsmouth, and others, were so much provoked, that, as was supposed (for the actors were never discovered), they procured Dryden, 10 whom they suspected as the author, to be waylaid and beaten. This incident is mentioned by the Duke of Buckinghamshire, the true writer, in his *Art of Poetry*; where he says of Dryden,

Though praised and beaten for another's rhymes,  
His own deserves as great applause sometimes.

His reputation in time was such, that his name was thought necessary to the success of every poetical or literary performance, and therefore he was engaged to contribute something, whatever it might be, to many publications. He 20 prefixed the *Life of Polybius* to the translation of Sir Henry Sheers; and those of *Lucian* and *Plutarch*, to versions of their works by different hands. Of the English *Tacitus* he translated the first book; and, if Gordon be credited, translated it from the French. Such a charge can hardly be mentioned without some degree of indignation; but it is not, I suppose, so much to be inferred, that Dryden wanted the literature necessary to the perusal of *Tacitus*, as that, considering himself as hidden in a crowd, he had no awe of the public; and, writing merely for money, was contented 30 to get it by the nearest way.

In 1680, the *Epistles of Ovid* being translated by the poets of the time, among which one was the work of Dryden, and another of Dryden and Lord Mulgrave, it was necessary to introduce them by a preface; and Dryden, who on such occasions was regularly summoned, prefixed a discourse upon

translation, which was then struggling for the liberty that it now enjoys. Why it should find any difficulty in breaking the shackles of verbal interpretation, which must for ever debar it from elegance, it would be difficult to conjecture, were not the power of prejudice every day observed. The authority of Jonson, Sandys, and Holaday, had fixed the judgment of the nation; and it was not easily believed that a better way could be found than they had taken, though Fanshawe, Denham, Waller, and Cowley had tried to give examples of a different practice

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In 1681, Dryden became yet more conspicuous by uniting politics with poetry, in the memorable satire called *Absalom and Achitophel*, written against the faction which, by Lord Shaftesbury's incitement, set the Duke of Monmouth at its head.

Of this poem, in which personal satire was applied to the support of public principles, and in which therefore every mind was interested, the reception was eager, and the sale so large, that my father, an old bookseller, told me, he had not known it equalled but by Sacheverell's trial

20

The reason of this general perusal Addison has attempted to derive from the delight which the mind feels in the investigation of secrets, and thinks that curiosity to decipher the names procured readers to the poem. There is no need to inquire why those verses were read, which, to all the attractions of wit, elegance, and harmony, added the co-operation of all the factious passions, and filled every mind with triumph or resentment

It could not be supposed that all the provocation given by Dryden would be endured without resistance or reply. Both his person and his party were exposed in their turn to the shafts of satire, which, though neither so well pointed, nor perhaps so well aimed, undoubtedly drew blood.

One of these poems is called *Dryden's Satire on his Muse*; ascribed, though, as Pope says, falsely, to Somers, who was afterwards chancellor. The poem, whose soever it was, has

much virulence, and some sprightliness. The writer tells all the ill that he can collect both of Dryden and his friends.

The poem of Absalom and Achitophel had two answers, now both forgotten; one called Azaria and Hushai; the other Absalom Senior. Of these hostile compositions, Dryden apparently imputes Absalom Senior to Settle, by quoting in his verses against him the second line. Azaria and Hushai was, as Wood says, imputed to him, though it is somewhat unlikely that he should write twice on the same occasion.

10 This is a difficulty which I cannot remove, for want of a minuter knowledge of poetical transactions.

The same year he published *The Medal*, of which the subject is a medal struck on Lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, by the ignoramus of a grand jury of Londoners.

In both poems he maintains the same principles, and saw them both attacked by the same antagonist. Elkanah Settle, who had answered Absalom, appeared with equal courage in opposition to *The Medal*, and published an answer called *The Medal Reversed*, with so much success in both encounters, that he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Such are the revolutions of fame, or such is the prevalence of fashion, that the man whose works have not yet been thought to deserve the care of collecting them, who died forgotten in an hospital, and whose latter years were spent in contriving shows for fairs, and carrying an elegy or epithalamium, of which the beginning and end were occasionally varied, but the intermediate parts were always the same, to every house where there was a funeral or a wedding, might with truth have had inscribed upon his  
30 stone,

Here lies the Rival and Antagonist of Dryden.

Settle was, for this rebellion, severely chastised by Dryden under the name of Doeg, in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*; and was perhaps for his factious audacity made the city poet, whose annual office was to describe the glories of the Mayor's day. Of these bards he was the last, and

seems not much to have deserved even this degree of regard, if it was paid to his political opinions; for he afterwards wrote a panegyric on the virtues of Judge Jefferies; and what more could have been done by the meanest zealot for prerogative!

Of translated fragments, or occasional poems, to enumerate the titles, or settle the dates, would be tedious, with little use. It may be observed that, as Dryden's genius was commonly excited by some personal regard, he rarely writes upon a general topic.

Soon after the accession of King James, when the design of reconciling the nation to the Church of Rome became apparent, and the religion of the court gave the only efficacious title to its favours, Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. This at any other time might have passed with little censure. Sir Kenelm Digby embraced popery, the two Rainolds reciprocally converted one another, and Chillingworth himself was a while so entangled in the wilds of controversy, as to retire for quiet to an infallible church. If men of argument and study can find such difficulties, or such motives, as may either unite them to the Church of Rome, or detain them in uncertainty, there can be no wonder that a man, who perhaps never inquired why he was a protestant, should by an artful and experienced disputant be made a papist, overborne by the sudden violence of new and unexpected arguments, or deceived by a representation which shows only the doubts on one part, and only the evidence on the other.

That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress towards wealth or honour, will not be thought to love truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time; and, as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at variance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity,

the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known; and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was then the state of popery; every artifice was used to show it in its fairest form; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive.

It is natural to hope that a comprehensive is likewise an elevated soul, and that whoever is wise is also honest. I am willing to believe that Dryden, having employed his mind, active as it was, upon different studies, and filled it, capacious as it was, with other materials, came unprovided to the controversy, and wanted rather skill to discover the right than virtue to maintain it. But enquiries into the heart are not for man; we must now leave him to his Judge.

The priests, having strengthened their cause by so powerful an adherent, were not long before they brought him into action. They engaged him to defend the controversial papers found in the strong box of Charles the Second; and, what yet was harder, to defend them against Stillingfleet.

With hopes of promoting popery, he was employed to translate Maimbourg's History of the League; which he published with a large introduction. His name is likewise prefixed to the English Life of Francis Xavier; but I know not that he ever owned himself the translator. Perhaps the use of his name was a pious fraud, which however seems not to have had much effect; for neither of the books, I believe, was ever popular.

The version of Xavier's Life is commended by Brown, in a pamphlet not written to flatter; and the occasion of it is said to have been, that the queen, when she solicited a son, made vows to him as her tutelary saint.

He was supposed to have undertaken to translate Varillas's History of Heresies; and, when Burnet published remarks

upon it, to have written an Answer; upon which Burnet makes the following observation:

"I have been informed from England, that a gentleman, who is famous both for poetry and several other things, had spent three months in translating *M. Varillas's History*; but that, as soon as my *Reflections* appeared, he discontinued his labour, finding the credit of his author was gone. Now, if he thinks it is recovered by his Answer, he will perhaps go on with his translation, and this may be, for aught I know, as good an entertainment for him as the conversation that 10 he had set on between the Hinds and Panthers and all the rest of animals, for whom *M. Varillas* may serve well enough as an author and this history and that poem are such extraordinary things of their kind, that it will be but suitable to see the author of the worst poem become likewise the translator of the worst history that the age has produced. If his grace and his wit improve both proportionably, he will hardly find that he has gained much by the change he has made, from having no religion, to chuse one of the worst. It is true, he had somewhat to sink from in matter of wit, 20 but, as for his morals, it is scarce possible for him to grow a worse man than he was. He has lately wreaked his malice on me for spoiling his three months labour, but in it he has done me all the honour that any man can receive from him, which is to be railed at by him. If I had ill-nature enough to prompt me to wish a very bad wish for him, it should be, that he would go on and finish his translation. By that it will appear, whether the English nation, which is the most competent judge in this matter, has, upon the seeing our debate, pronounced in *M. Varillas's* favour, or in mine. It 30 is true, Mr. D. will suffer a little by it, but at least it will serve to keep him in from other extravagances, and if he gains little honour by this work, yet he cannot lose so much by it as he has done by his last employment."

Having probably felt his own inferiority in theological controversy, he was desirous of trying whether, by bringing

poetry to aid his arguments, he might become a more efficacious defender of his new profession. To reason in verse was, indeed, one of his powers ; but subtilty and harmony, united, are still feeble, when opposed to truth.

Actuated therefore by zeal for Rome, or hope of fame, he published the *Hind and Panther* (1687), a poem in which the Church of Rome, figured by the *milk-white Hind*, defends her tenets against the Church of England, represented by the Panther, a beast beautiful, but spotted.

A fable, which exhibits two beasts talking theology, appears at once full of absurdity ; and it was accordingly ridiculed in the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*, a parody, written by Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and Prior, who then gave the first specimen of his abilities.

The conversion of such a man, at such a time, was not likely to pass uncensured. Three dialogues were published by the facetious Thomas Brown, of which the two first were called *Reasons of Mr. Bayes's changing his religion* : and the third, the *Reasons of Mr. Hains the Player's Conversion and Re-conversion*. The first was printed in 1688, the second not till 1690, the third in 1691. The clamour seems to have been long continued, and the subject to have strongly fixed the public attention.

In the two first dialogues Bayes is brought into the company of Crites and Eugenius, with whom he had formerly debated on dramatic poetry. The two talkers in the third are Mr. Bayes and Mr. Hains.

Brown was a man not deficient in literature, nor destitute of fancy ; but he seems to have thought it the pinnacle of excellence to be a *merry fellow* ; and therefore laid out his powers upon small jests or gross buffoonery ; so that his performances have little intrinsic value, and were read only while they were recommended by the novelty of the event that occasioned them.

These dialogues are like his other works : what sense or knowledge they contain is disgraced by the garb in which it

is exhibited. One great source of pleasure is to call Dryden's *little Bayes*. Ajax, who happens to be mentioned, is "he that wore as many cow-hides upon his shield as would have furnished half the king's array with shoe-leather."

Being asked whether he has seen the Hind and Panther, Crites answers: "Seen it! Mr. Bayes; why I can still find it nowhere but it pursues me. it haunts me worse than a pewter buttoned serjeant does a decayed cit. Sometimes I meet it in a handbox, when my laundress brings home my linen; sometimes, whether I will or no, it lights my pipe at a coffee-house, sometimes it surprises me in a trunk-maker's shop, and sometimes it refreshes my memory for me on the backside of a Chancery-lane parcel. For your comfort too, Mr. Bayes, I have not only seen it, as you may perceive, but have read it too, and can quote it as freely upon occasion as a frugal tradesman can quote that noble treatise the Worth of a Penny to his extravagant 'prentice, that revels in stewed apples and penny custards."

The whole animation of these compositions arises from a profusion of ludicrous and affected comparisons.

Brown does not wholly forget past transactions. "You began," says Crites to Bayes, "with a very indifferently chosen religion, and have not mended the matter in your last choice. It was but reason that your Muse, which appeared first in a Tyrant's quarrel, should employ her last efforts to justify the usurpation of the Hind."

Next year the nation was summoned to celebrate the birth of the Prince. Now was the time for Dryden to rouse his imagination, and strain his voice. Happy days were at hand and he was willing to enjoy and diffuse the anticipated blessings. He published a poem, filled with predictions of greatness and prosperity. predictions, of which it is not necessary to tell how they have been verified.

A few months passed after these joyful notes, and ever

which he had enjoyed with so much pride and praise, was transferred to Shadwell, an old enemy, whom he had formerly stigmatised by the name of Og. Dryden could not decently complain that he was deposed; but seemed very angry that Shadwell succeeded him, and has therefore celebrated the intruder's inauguration in a poem exquisitely satirical, called *Mac Flecknoe*; of which the *Dunciad*, as Pope himself declares, is an imitation, though more extended in its plan, and more diversified in its incidents.

- 10 It is related by Prior, that Lord Dorset, when as chamberlain he was constrained to eject Dryden from his office, gave him from his own purse an allowance equal to the salary. This is no romantic or incredible act of generosity; an hundred a year is often enough given to claims less cogent by men less famed for liberality. Yet Dryden always represented himself as suffering under a public infliction; and once particularly demands respect for the patience with which he endured the loss of his little fortune. His patron might, indeed, enjoin him to suppress his bounty; but if he  
20 suffered nothing, he should not have complained.

During the short reign of King James, he had written nothing for the stage, being, in his opinion, more profitably employed in controversy and flattery. Of praise he might perhaps have been less lavish without inconvenience, for James was never said to have much regard for poetry: he was to be flattered only by adopting his religion.

- Times were now changed: Dryden was no longer the court-poet, and was to look back for support to his former trade; and having waited about two years, either considering  
30 himself as discountenanced by the public, or perhaps expecting a second Revolution, he produced *Don Sebastian* in 1690; and in the next four years four dramas more.

In 1693 appeared a new version of *Juvenal* and *Persius*. Of *Juvenal* he translated the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires: and of *Persius* the whole work. On this occasion he introduced his two sons to the public, as

nurplings of the Muses. The fourteenth of Juvenal was the work of John and the seventh of Charles Dryden. He prefixed a very ample preface, in the form of a dedication to Lord Dorset; and there gives an account of the design which he had once formed to write an epic poem on the actions either of Arthur or the Black Prince. He considered the epic as necessarily including some kind of supernatural agency, and had imagined a new kind of contest between the guardian angels of kingdoms, of whom he conceived that each might be represented zealous for his charge, 10 without any intended opposition to the purposes of the Supreme Being, of which all created minds must in part be ignorant.

This is the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed. The surprises and terrors of enchantments which have succeeded to the intrigues and oppositions of Pagan deities, afford very striking scenes, and open a vast extent to the imagination, but, as Boileau observes (and Boileau will be seldom found mistaken), with this incurable defect, that, in a contest between Heaven and 20 Hell, we know at the beginning which is to prevail; for this reason we follow Rinaldo to the enchanted wood with more curiosity than terror.

In the scheme of Dryden there is one great difficulty, which yet he would perhaps have had address enough to surmount. In a war justice can be but on one side; and, to entitle the hero to the protection of angels, he must fight in the defence of indubitable right. Yet some of the celestial beings, thus opposed to each other, must have been represented as defending guilt. 30

That this poem was never written, is reasonably to be lamented. It would doubtless have improved our numbers, and enlarged our language; and might perhaps have contributed by pleasing instruction to rectify our opinions, and purify our manners.

What he required as the indispensable condition of such

an undertaking, a public stipend, was not likely in those times to be obtained. Riches were not become familiar to us; nor had the nation yet learned to be liberal.

This plan, he charged Blackmore with stealing; "only," says he, "the guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage."

In 1694, he began the most laborious and difficult of all his works, the translation of Virgil; from which he borrowed two months, that he might turn Fresnoy's *Art of Painting* 10 into English prose. The preface, which he boasts to have written in twelve mornings, exhibits a parallel of poetry and painting, with a miscellaneous collection of critical remarks, such as cost a mind stored like his no labour to produce them.

In 1697, he published his version of the works of Virgil; and, that no opportunity of profit might be lost, dedicated the Pastorals to the Lord Clifford, the Georgics to the Earl of Chesterfield, and the Eneid to the Earl of Mulgrave. This economy of flattery, at once lavish and discreet, did not 20 pass without observation.

This translation was censured by Milbourne, a clergyman, styled, by Pope, "the fairest of critics," because he exhibited his own version to be compared with that which he condemned.

His last work was his Fables, published in 1699, in consequence, as is supposed, of a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tonson; by which he obliged himself, in consideration of three hundred pounds, to finish for the press ten thousand verses.

30 In this volume is comprised the well-known Ode on St. Cecilia's day, which, as appeared by a letter communicated to Dr. Birch, he spent a fortnight in composing and correcting. But what is this to the patience and diligence of Boileau, whose Equivoque, a poem of only three hundred forty six lines, took from his life eleven months to write it, and three years to revise it.

Part of this book of Fables is the first Iliad in English, intended as a specimen of a version of the whole. Considering into what hands Homer was to fall, the reader cannot but rejoice that this project went no further.

The time was now at hand which was to put an end to all his schemes and labours. On the first of May, 1701, having been some time, as he tells us, a cripple in his limbs, he died, in Gerard-street, of a mortification in his leg.

There is extant a wild story relating to some vexatious events that happened at his funeral, which, at the end of 10 *Congreve's Life*, by a writer of I know not what credit, are thus related, as I find the account transferred to a biographical dictionary

"Mr. Dryden dying on the Wednesday morning, Mr. Thomas Sprat, then Bishop of Rochester and Dean of Westminster, sent the next day to the Lady Elizabeth Howard, Mr. Dryden's widow, that he would make a present of the ground, which was forty pounds, with all the other Abbey fees. The Lord Halifax likewise sent to the Lady Elizabeth, and Mr. Charles Dryden her son, that, if they would give 20 him leave to bury Mr. Dryden, he would inter him with a gentleman's private funeral, and afterwards bestow five hundred pounds on a monument in the Abbey; which, as they had no reason to refuse, they accepted. On the Saturday following the company came, the corpse was put into a velvet hearse, and eighteen mourning coaches, filled with company, attended. When they were just ready to move, the Lord Jefferies, son of the Lord Chancellor Jefferies, with some of his rakish companions, coming by, asked whose funeral it was and being told Mr. Dryden's, he said, 'What, 30 shall Dryden, the greatest honour and ornament of the nation, be buried after this private manner?' No, gentlemen, let all that loved Mr. Dryden, and honour his memory, alight and join with me in gaining my lady's consent to let me have the honour of his interment, which shall be after another manner than this; and I will bestow a thousand

pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him.' The gentlemen in the coaches, not knowing of the Bishop of Rochester's favour, nor of the Lord Halifax's generous design (they both having, out of respect to the family, enjoined the Lady Elizabeth, and her son, to keep their favour concealed to the world, and let it pass for their own expense), readily came out of their coaches, and attended Lord Jefferies up to the lady's bedside, who was then sick. He repeated the purport of what he had before said; but she absolutely refusing, he  
10 fell on his kness, vowing never to rise till his request was granted. The rest of the company by his desire kneeled also; and the lady, being under a sudden surprise, fainted away. As soon as she recovered her speech, she cried, *No, no. Enough*, gentlemen, replied he; my lady is very good, she says, *Go, go*. She repeated her former words with all her strength, but in vain, for her feeble voice was lost in their acclamations of joy; and the Lord Jefferies ordered the hearsemen to carry the corpse to Mr. Russel's, an undertaker's in Cheapside, and leave it there till he should send orders for  
20 the embalmment, which, he added, should be after the royal manner. His directions were obeyed, the company dispersed, and Lady Elizabeth and her son remained inconsolable. The next day Mr. Charles Dryden waited on the Lord Halifax, and the Bishop, to excuse his mother and himself, by relating the real truth. But neither his Lordship nor the Bishop would admit of any plea: especially the latter, who had the Abbey lighted; the ground opened, the choir attending, an anthem ready set, and himself waiting for sometime without any corpse to bury. The undertaker, after three days' ex-  
30 pectance of orders for embalmment without receiving any, waited on the Lord Jefferies; who pretending ignorance of the matter, turned it off with an ill-natured jest, saying, that those who observed the orders of a drunken frolic deserved no better; that he remembered nothing at all of it; and that he might do what he pleased with the corpse. Upon this, the undertaker waited upon the Lady Elizabeth and her son,

and threatened to bring the corpse home, and set it before the door. They desired a day's respite, which was granted. Mr. Charles Dryden wrote a handsome letter to the Lord Jefferies, who returned it with this cool answer: 'That he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it.' He then addressed the Lord Halifax and the Bishop of Rochester, who absolutely refused to do anything in it. In this distress Dr. Garth sent for the corpse to the College of Physicians, and proposed a funeral by subscription, to which himself set a most noble example. At last a day, 10 about three weeks after Mr. Dryden's decease, was appointed for the interment. Dr. Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration, at the College, over the corpse; which was attended to the Abbey by a numerous train of coaches. When the funeral was over, Mr. Charles Dryden sent a challenge to the Lord Jefferies, who refusing to answer it, he sent several others, and went often himself; but could neither get a letter delivered, nor admittance to speak to him, which so incensed him, that he resolved, since his lordship refused to answer him like a gentleman, that he would watch an opportunity 20 to meet and fight off-hand, though with all the rules of honour; which his lordship hearing, left the town. and Mr. Charles Dryden could never have the satisfaction of meeting him, though he sought it till his death with the utmost application."

This story I once intended to omit, as it appears with no great evidence, nor have I met with any confirmation, but in a letter of Farquhar, and he only relates that the funeral of Dryden was tumultuary and confused.

Supposing the story true, we may remark, that the gradual 30 change of manners, though imperceptible in the process, appears great when different times, and those not very distant, are compared. If at this time a young drunken lord should interrupt the pompous regularity of a magnificent funeral, what would be the event, but that he would be jostled out of the way, and compelled to be quiet? If he

should thrust himself into a house, he would be sent roughly away; and, what is yet more to the honour of the present time, I believe that those, who had subscribed to the funeral of a man like Dryden, would not, for such an accident, have withdrawn their contributions.

He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey, where, though the Duke of Newcastle had, in a general dedication prefixed by Congreve to his dramatic works, accepted thanks for his intention of erecting him a monument, 10 he lay long without distinction, till the Duke of Buckinghamshire gave him a tablet, inscribed only with the name of DRYDEN.

He married (1663) the Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, with circumstances, according to the satire imputed to Lord Somers, not very honourable to either party; by her he had three sons, Charles, John, and Henry. Charles was usher of the palace to Pope Clement the Xth; and visiting England in 1704, was drowned in an attempt to swim across the Thames at Windsor.

20 John was author of a comedy. He is said to have died at Rome. Henry entered into some religious order. It is some proof of Dryden's sincerity in his second religion, that he taught it to his sons. A man, conscious of hypocritical profession in himself, is not likely to convert others; and, as his sons were qualified in 1693 to appear among the translators of Juvenal, they must have been taught some religion before their father's change.

Of the person of Dryden I know not any account: of his mind, the portrait which has been left by Congreve, who 30 knew him with great familiarity, is such as adds our love of his manners to our admiration of his genius. "He was," old, "a nature exceedingly humane and com-  
give injuries, and capable of a sincere  
ha: defended him. His friend-  
yond his professions.  
ss; but somewhat

slow, and, as it were, diffident, in his advances to others; he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations. he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of everything that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it, but then his communication was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extreme ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehensions of others, in respect of his own oversights or mistakes."

To this account of Congreve nothing can be objected but the fondness of friendship, and to have excited that fondness in such a mind is no small degree of praise. The disposition of Dryden however, is shown in this character rather as it exhibited itself in cursory conversation, than as it operated on the more important parts of life. His placability and his friendship indeed were solid virtues, but courtesy and good humour are often found with little real worth. Since Congreve, who knew him well, has told us no more, the rest must be collected as it can from other testimonies, and particularly from those notices which Dryden has very liberally given us of himself.

The modesty which made him so slow to advance and so easy to be repulsed, was certainly no suspicion of deficient merit, or unconsciousness of his own value. he appears to have known in its whole extent, the dignity of his character, and to have set a very high value on his own powers and performances. He probably did not offer his

conversation, because he expected it to be solicited ; and he retired from a cold reception, not submissive but indignant, with such reverence of his own greatness as made him unwilling to expose it to neglect or violation.

His modesty was by no means inconsistent with ostentatiousness ; he is diligent enough to remind the world of his merit, and expresses with very little scruple his high opinion of his own powers ; but his self-commendations are read without scorn or indignation ; we allow his claims, and love  
10 his frankness.

Tradition, however, has not allowed that his confidence in himself exempted him from jealousy of others. He is accused of envy and insidiousness ; and is particularly charged with inciting Creech to translate Horace, that he might lose the reputation which Lucretius had given him.

Of this charge we immediately discover that it is merely conjectural ; the purpose was such as no man would confess ; and a crime that admits no proof, why should we believe ?

20 He has been described as magisterially presiding over the younger writers ; and assuming the distribution of poetical fame ; but he who excels has a right to teach, and he whose judgment is incontestable may without usurpation examine and decide.

Congreve represents him as ready to advise and instruct ; but there is reason to believe that his communication was rather useful than entertaining. He declares of himself that he was saturnine and not one of those whose sprightly sayings diverted company ; and one of his censurers makes  
30 him say,

Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay ;  
To writing bred, I knew not what to say.

There are men whose powers operate only at leisure and in retirement, and whose intellectual vigour deserts them in conversation ; whom merriment confuses, and objection disconcerts ; whose bashfulness restrains their exertion, and

suffers them not to speak till the time of speaking is past; or whose attention to their own character makes them unwilling to utter at hazard what has not been considered, and cannot be recalled

Of Dryden's slowness in conversation it is vain to search or to guess the cause. He certainly wanted neither sentiments nor language: his intellectual treasures were great, though they were locked up from his own use. "His thoughts," when he wrote, "flowed in upon him so fast, that his only care was which to chuse and which to reject" 10 Such rapidity of composition naturally promises a flow of talk; yet we must be content to believe what an enemy says of him, when he likewise says it of himself. But, whatever was his character as a companion, it appears that he lived in familiarity with the highest persons of his time. It is related by Carte of the Duke of Ormond, that he used often to pass a night with Dryden, and those with whom Dryden conversed—who they were, Carte has not told, but certainly the convivial table at which Ormond sat was not surrounded with a plebeian society. He was indeed reproached with 20 boasting of his familiarity with the great, and Horace will support him in the opinion, that to please superiors is not the lowest kind of merit.

The merit of pleasing must, however, be estimated by the means. Favour is not always gained by good actions or laudable qualities. Caresses and preferments are often bestowed on the auxiliaries of vice, the promoters of pleasure, or the flatterers of vanity. Dryden has never been charged with any personal agency unworthy of a good character: he abetted vice and vanity only with his pen. *One of his enemies* 30 has accused him of lewdness in his conversation, but if accusation without proof be credited—who shall be innocent?

His works afford too many examples of dissolute licentiousness, and object adulation: but they were probably, like his merriment, artificial and constrained: the effects of study and meditation, and his trade rather than his pleasure.

Of the mind that can trade in corruption, and can deliberately pollute itself with ideal wickedness for the sake of spreading the contagion in society, I wish not to conceal or excuse the depravity.—Such degradation of the dignity of genius, such abuse of superlative abilities, cannot be contemplated but with grief and indignation. What consolation can be had, Dryden has afforded, by living to repent, and to testify his repentance.

Of dramatic immorality he did not want examples among  
10 his predecessors, or companions among his contemporaries: but, in the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation, I know not whether, since the days in which the Roman emperors were deified, he has been ever equalled except by *Afra Behn* in an address to *Eleanor Gwyn*. When once he has undertaken the task of praise, he no longer retains shame in himself, nor supposes it in his patron. As many odoriferous bodies are observed to diffuse perfumes from year to year, without sensible diminution of bulk or weight, he appears never to have impoverished his mint of flattery by  
20 his expenses, however lavish. He had all the forms of excellence, intellectual and moral, combined in his mind, with endless variation; and, when he had scattered on the hero of the day the golden shower of wit and virtue, he had ready for him, whom he wished to court on the morrow, new wit and virtue with another stamp. Of this kind of meanness he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity: he considers the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift, more delighted with the fertility of his invention than  
30 mortified by the prostitution of his judgment. It is indeed not certain, that on these occasions his judgment much rebelled against his interest. There are minds which easily sink into submission, that look on grandeur with undistinguishing reverence, and discover no defect where there is elevation of rank and affluence of riches.

With his praises of others and of himself is always inter-

mingled a strain of discontent and lamentation, a sullen growl of resentment, or a querulous murmur of distress. His works are under-valued, his merit is unrewarded, and, "he has few thanks to pay his stars that he was born among Englishmen." To his critics he is sometimes contemptuous, sometimes resentful, and sometimes submissive. The writer who thinks his works formed for duration, mistakes his interest when he mentions his enemies. He degrades his own dignity by showing that he was affected by their censures, and gives lasting importance to names, which, left 10 to themselves, would vanish from remembrance. From this principle Dryden did not oft depart; his complaints are for the greater part general, he seldom pollutes his page with an adverse name. He condescended indeed to a controversy with Settle, in which he perhaps may be considered rather as assaulting than repelling; and since Settle is sunk into oblivion, his libel remains injurious only to himself.

Among answers to critics, no poetical attacks, or altercations, are to be included, they are like other poems, effusions of genius, produced as much to obtain praise as to obviate 20 censure. These Dryden practised, and in these he excelled.

Of Collier, Blackmore, and Milbourne, he has made mention in the preface of his Fables. To the censure of Collier, whose remarks may be rather termed admonitions than criticisms, he makes little reply, being, at the age of sixty-eight, attentive to better things than the claps of a playhouse. He complains of Collier's rudeness, and the "horse-play of his raillery"; and asserts, that, "in many places he has perverted by his glosses the meaning" of what he censures; but in other things he confesses that he is 30 justly taxed, and says, with great calmness and candour, "I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts or expressions of mine that can be truly accused of obscenity, immorality, or profaneness, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, he will be glad of my repentance." Yet as our best dispositions are imperfect,

he left standing in the same book a reflection on Collier of great asperity, and indeed of more asperity than wit.

Blackmore he represents as made his enemy by the poem of Absalom and Achitophel, which "he thinks a little hard upon his fanatic patrons"; and charges him with borrowing the plan of his *Arthur* from the preface to *Juvenal*, "though he had," says he, "the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but instead of it to traduce me in a libel."

The libel in which Blackmore traduced him was a Satire upon Wit; in which, having lamented the exuberance of false wit and the deficiency of true, he proposes that all wit should be re-coined, before it is current, and appoints masters of assay who shall reject all that is light or debased.

"Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless dross  
Is purged away, there will be mighty loss;  
Ev'n Congreve, Southern, manly Wycherley,  
When thus refined, will grievous sufferers be;  
Into the melting pot when Dryden comes,  
What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes!  
How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,  
And wicked mixture, shall be purged away!

Thus stands the passage in the last edition; but in the original there was an abatement of the censure, beginning thus:

But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear  
Th' examination of the most severe.

Blackmore, finding the censure resented, and the civility disregarded, ungenerously omitted the softer part. Such variations discover a writer who consults his passions more than his virtue; and it may be reasonably supposed that Dryden imputes his enmity to its true cause.

Of *Milbourne* he wrote only in general terms, such as are always ready at the call of anger, whether just or not: a short extract will be sufficient. "He pretends a quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul upon priesthood; if I have, I am



the times, by venturing to be wicked as far as he durst. When he professed himself a convert to popery, he did not pretend to have received any new conviction of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The persecution of critics was not the worst of his vexations; he was much more disturbed by the importunities of want. His complaints of poverty are so frequently repeated, either with the dejection of weakness sinking in helpless misery, or the indignation of merit claiming its tribute from  
10 mankind, that it is impossible not to detest the age which could impose on such a man the necessity of such solicitations, or not to despise the man who could submit to such solicitations without necessity.

\* Whether by the world's neglect, or his own imprudence, I am afraid that the greatest part of his life was passed in exigencies. Such outcries were surely never uttered but in never pain. Of his supplies or his expenses no probable estimate can now be made. Except the salary of the Laurent, to which King James added the office of Historiographer,  
20 perhaps with some additional emoluments, his whole revenue seems to have been casual; and it is well known that he seldom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal; and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow.

Of his plays the profit was not great; and of the produce of his other works very little intelligence can be had. By discoursing with the late amiable Mr. Tonson, I could not find that any memorials of the transactions between his predecessor and Dryden had been preserved, except the  
30 following papers:

"I do hereby promise to pay John Dryden, Esq., or order, on the 25th of March, 1699, the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, in consideration of ten thousand verses, which the said John Dryden, Esq., is to deliver to me, Jacob Tonson, when finished, whereof seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less, are already in the said Jacob Tonson's

possession. And I do hereby farther promise, and engage myself, to make up the said sum of two hundred and fifty guineas three hundred pounds sterling to the said John Dryden, Esq, his executors, administrators, or assigns, at the beginning of the second impression of the said ten thousand verses.

"In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this 20th day of March, 1698.

"JACOB TONSON.

"Scaled and delivered, being first duly stampd, pursuant to the acts of parliament for that purpose, in the presence of

"Ben. Portlock,  
"Will. Congreve."

"March 24, 1698

"Received then of Mr Jacob Tonson the sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings, in pursuance of an agreement for ten thousand verses, to be delivered by me to the said Jacob Tonson, whereof I have already delivered to him about seven thousand five hundred, more less; he the said Jacob Tonson being obliged to make up the foresaid sum of two hundred sixty-eight pounds fifteen shillings three hundred pounds, at the beginning of the second impression of the foresaid ten thousand verses.

"I say, received by me

"JOHN DRYDEN.

"Witness, Charles Dryden "

<sup>1</sup> Two hundred and fifty guineas, at 1*l* 1*s* 6*d*, is 26*l* 1*5*s**

It is manifest, from the dates of this contract, that relates to the volume of Fables, which contains about twelve thousand verses, and for which therefore the payment may have been afterwards enlarged.

I have been told of another letter yet remaining, in which he desires Tonson to bring him money, to pay for a watch which he had ordered for his son, and which the maker would not leave without the price.

The inevitable consequence of poverty is dependence. Dryden had probably no recourse in his exigencies but to his bookseller. The particular character of Tonson I do not know; but the general conduct of traders was much less liberal in those times than in our own; their views were  
10 narrower, and their manners grosser. To the mercantile ruggedness of that race, the delicacy of the poet was sometimes exposed. Lord Bolingbroke, who in his youth had cultivated poetry, related to Dr. King of Oxford, that one day, when he visited Dryden, they heard, as they were conversing, another person entering the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson. You will take care not to depart before he goes away: for I have not completed the sheet which  
I promised him; and, if you leave me unprotected, I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt  
20 his tongue."

What rewards he obtained for his poems, besides the payment of the bookseller, cannot be known. Mr. Derrick, who consulted some of his relations, was informed that his Fables obtained five hundred pounds from the Duchess of Ormond; a present not unsuitable to the magnificence of that splendid family; and he quotes Moyle, as relating that forty pounds were paid by a musical society for the use of Alexander's Feast.

In those days the economy of government was yet  
30 unsettled, and the payments of the exchequer were dilatory and uncertain; of this disorder there is reason to believe that the Laureat sometimes felt the effects; for in one of his prefaces he complains of those, who, being intrusted with the distribution of the prince's bounty, suffer those that depend upon it to languish in penury.

Of his petty habits or slight amusements, tradition has

retained little. Of the only two men whom I have found to whom he was personally known, one told me, that at the house which he frequented, called Will's coffee-house, the appeal upon any literary dispute was made to him; and the other related, that his armed chair, which in the winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony, and that he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. This is all the intelligence which his two survivors afforded me.

One of his opinions will do him no honour in the present 10 age, though in his own time, at least in the beginning of it, he was far from having it confined to himself. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. In the appendix to the Life of Congreve, is a narrative of some of his predictions wonderfully fulfilled; but I know not the writer's means of information, or character of veracity. That he had the configurations of the horoscope in his mind, and considered them as influencing the affairs of men, he does not forbear to hint.

The utmost malice of the stars is past.—  
Now frequent turns the happier lights among,  
And high-raised Jove, from his dark prison freed,  
Those weights took off that on his planet hung,  
Will gloriously the new-laid works succeed.

20

He has elsewhere shown his attention to the planetary powers; and in the preface to his Fables has endeavoured obliquely to justify his superstition, by attributing the same to some of the ancients. The letter added to this narrative leaves no doubt of his notions or practice [p. 108].

So slight and so scanty is the knowledge which I have 30 been able to collect concerning the private life and domestic manners of a man, whom every English generation must mention with reverence as a critic and a poet.

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DRYDEN may be properly considered as the father of English criticism, as the writer who first taught us to

determine upon principles the merit of composition. Of our former poets, the greatest dramatist wrote without rules, conducted through life and nature by a genius that rarely misled, and rarely deserted him. Of the rest, those who knew the laws of propriety had neglected to teach them.

Two Arts of English Poetry were written in the days of Elizabeth by Webb and Puttenham, from which something might be learned, and a few hints had been given by Jonson and Cowley; but Dryden's Essay on Dramatic Poetry was the first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing.

He who, having formed his opinions in the present age of English literature, turns back to peruse this dialogue, will not perhaps find much increase of knowledge, or much novelty of instruction; but he is to remember that critical principles were then in the hands of a few, who had gathered them partly from the ancients, and partly from the Italians and French. The structure of dramatic poems was not then generally understood. Audiences applauded by instinct; and poets perhaps often pleased by chance.

A writer who obtains his full purpose loses himself in his own lustre. Of an opinion which is no longer doubted, the evidence ceases to be examined. Of an art universally practised, the first teacher is forgotten. Learning once made popular is no longer learning; it has the appearance of something which we have bestowed upon ourselves, as the dew appears to rise from the field which it refreshes.

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another. Dryden at least imported his science, and gave his country what it wanted before; or, rather, he imported only the materials, and manufactured them by his own skill.

The Dialogue on the Drama was one of his first essays of criticism, written when he was yet a timorous candidate

for reputation, and therefore laboured with, that diligence which he might allow himself somewhat to remit, when his name gave sanction to his positions, and his awe of the public was abated, partly by custom, and partly by success. It will not be easy to find, in all the opulence of our language, a treatise so artfully variegated with successive representations of opposite probabilities, so enlivened with imagery, so brightened with illustrations. His portraits of the English dramatists are wrought with great spirit and diligence. The account of Shakspeare may stand as a perpetual model of 10 encomiastic criticism, exact without minuteness, and lofty without exaggeration. The praise lavished by Longinus, on the attestation of the heroes of Marathon, by Demosthenes, fades away before it. In a few lines is exhibited a character, so extensive in its comprehension, and so curious in its limitations, that nothing can be added, diminished, or reformed; nor can the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence, boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower 20 value, though of greater bulk.

In this, and in all his other essays on the same subject, the criticism of Dryden is the criticism of a poet; not a dull collection of theorems, nor a rude detection of faults, which perhaps the censor was not able to have committed, but a gay and vigorous dissertation, where delight is mingled with instruction, and where the author proves his right of judgment by his power of performance.

The different manner and effect with which critical knowledge may be conveyed was perhaps never more clearly 30 exemplified than in the performances of Rymer and Dryden. It was said of a dispute between two mathematicians, "*mahm cum Scaligero errare, quam cum Clavio recte sapere*"; that "it was more eligible to go wrong with one, than right with the other." A tendency of the same kind every mind must feel at the perusal of Dryden's *pre faces and*

Rymer's discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dressed in the graces of elegance; and, if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a  
10 tyrant.

As he had studied with great diligence the art of Poetry, and enlarged or rectified his notions, by experience perpetually increasing, he had his mind stored with principles and observations; he poured out his knowledge with little labour; for of labour, notwithstanding the multiplicity of his productions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover. To write *con amore*, with fondness for the employment, with perpetual touches and retouches, with unwillingness to take leave of his own idea, and an unwearied  
20 pursuit of unattainable perfection, was, I think, no part of his character.

His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trapp, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite, says, "*Novimus*  
30 *judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri, pulchro sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam critices normam exactas: illo judice id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, et in quo nunc occupatur.*"

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatic rhyme is generally known. Spence, in his remarks on Pope's *Odyssey*, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the *Æneid*, in favour of translating an epic poem into blank verse, but he forgets that when his author attempted the *Ilíad*, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor 10 very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by Sewel.<sup>1</sup> His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of 20 Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad if he had heard him thundering out

*Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso*

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds to exaggerations somewhat hyperbical; but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty, if he had condemned him to straw for *one sounding line*. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impress into the service.

What he wishes to say, he says at hazard. he cited 30 *Gorbuduc* which he had never seen, gives a false account of Chapman's versification, and discovers, in the preface to his *Fables*, that he translated the first book of the *Ilíad* without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Rymer's discourses. With Dryden we are wandering in quest of Truth; whom we find, if we find her at all, dressed in the graces of elegance; and, if we miss her, the labour of the pursuit rewards itself; we are led only through fragrance and flowers. Rymer, without taking a nearer, takes a rougher way; every step is to be made through thorns and brambles; and Truth, if we meet her, appears repulsive by her mien, and ungraceful by her habit. Dryden's criticism has the majesty of a queen; Rymer's has the ferocity of a  
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✓ His criticism may be considered as general or occasional. In his general precepts, which depend upon the nature of things, and the structure of the human mind, he may doubtless be safely recommended to the confidence of the reader; but his occasional and particular positions were sometimes interested, sometimes negligent, and sometimes capricious. It is not without reason that Trapp, speaking of the praises which he bestows on Palamon and Arcite, says, "*Novimus*  
30 *judicium Drydeni de poemate quodam Chauceri, pulchro sane illo, et admodum laudando, nimirum quod non modo vere epicum sit, sed Iliada etiam atque Æneada æquet, imo superet. Sed novimus eodem tempore viri illius maximi non semper accuratissimas esse censuras, nec ad severissimam critices normam exactas: illo iudice id plerumque optimum est, quod nunc præ manibus habet, et in quo nunc occupatur.*"

He is therefore by no means constant to himself. His defence and desertion of dramatic rhyme is generally known. Spence, in his remarks on Pope's *Odyssey*, produces what he thinks an unconquerable quotation from Dryden's preface to the *Æneid*, in favour of translating an epic poem into blank verse; but he forgets that when his author attempted the *Iliad*, some years afterwards, he departed from his own decision, and translated into rhyme.

When he has any objection to obviate, or any licence to defend, he is not very scrupulous about what he asserts, nor 10 very cautious, if the present purpose be served, not to entangle himself in his own sophistries. But when all arts are exhausted, like other hunted animals, he sometimes stands at bay; when he cannot disown the grossness of one of his plays, he declares that he knows not any law that prescribes morality to a comic poet.

His remarks on ancient or modern writers are not always to be trusted. His parallel of the versification of Ovid with that of Claudian has been very justly censured by Sewel.<sup>1</sup> His comparison of the first line of Virgil with the first of 20 Statius is not happier. Virgil, he says, is soft and gentle, and would have thought Statius mad, if he had heard him thundering out

*Quæ superimposito moles geminata colosso*

Statius perhaps heats himself, as he proceeds, to exaggerations somewhat hyperbical, but undoubtedly Virgil would have been too hasty, if he had condemned him to straw for one sounding line. Dryden wanted an instance, and the first that occurred was impress into the service

What he wished to say, he says at hazard. He cited 30 Gorbuduc, which he had never seen; gives a false account of Chapman's versification, and discovers, in the preface to his *Fables*, that he translated the first book of the *Iliad* without knowing what was in the second.

It will be difficult to prove that Dryden ever made any

<sup>1</sup> Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

great advances in literature. As having distinguished himself at Westminster under the tuition of Busby, who advanced his scholars to a height of knowledge very rarely attained in grammar-schools, he resided afterwards at Cambridge; it is not to be supposed, that his skill in the ancient languages was deficient, compared with that of common students, but his scholastic acquisitions seem not proportionate to his opportunities and abilities. He could not, like Milton or Cowley, have made his name illustrious merely by his  
 10 learning. He mentions but few books, and those such as lie in the beaten track of regular study; from which if ever he departs, he is in danger of losing himself in unknown regions.

In his Dialogue on the Drama, he pronounces with great confidence that the Latin tragedy of Medea is not Ovid's, because it is not sufficiently interesting and pathetic. He might have determined the question upon surer evidence; for it is quoted by Quintilian as the work of Seneca; and the only line which remains of Ovid's play, for one line is  
 20 left us, is not there to be found. There was therefore no need of the gravity of conjecture, or the discussion of plot or sentiment, to find what was already known upon higher authority than such discussions can ever reach.

✓ His literature, though not always free from ostentation, will be commonly found either obvious, and made his own by the art of dressing it; or superficial, which, by what he gives, shows what he wanted; or erroneous, hastily collected, and negligently scattered.

Yet it cannot be said that his genius is ever unprovided  
 30 of matter, or that his fancy languishes in penury of ideas.

✓ His works abound with knowledge, and sparkle with illustrations. There is scarcely any science or faculty that does not supply him with occasional images and lucky similitudes; every page discovers a mind very widely acquainted both with art and nature, and in full possession of great stores of intellectual wealth. Of him that knows much it is natural



his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled: every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but, while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Everything is excused by the play of images, and the sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete.

He who writes much will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always *another and the same*; he does not exhibit a second time the same elegancies in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance.

From his prose, however, Dryden derives only his accidental and secondary praise; the veneration with which his name is pronounced by every cultivator of English literature, is paid to him as he refined the language, improved the sentiments, and tuned the numbers of English poetry.

After about half a century of forced thoughts, and rugged metre, some advances towards nature and harmony had been already made by Waller and Denham; they had shown that long discourses in rhyme grew more pleasing when they were

broken into couplets, and that verse consisted not only in the number but the arrangement of syllables.

But though they did much, who can deny that they left much to do? Their works were not many, nor were their minds of very ample comprehension. More examples of more modes of composition were necessary for the establishment of regularity, and the introduction of propriety in word and thought.

Every language of a learned nation necessarily divides itself into diction scholastic and popular, grave and familiar, 10 elegant and gross; and from a nice distinction of these different parts arises a great part of the beauty of style. But, if we except a few minds, the favourites of nature, to whom their own original rectitude was in the place of rules, this delicacy of selection was little known to our authors; our speech lay before them in a heap of confusion; and every man took for every purpose what chance might offer him.

There was, therefore, before the time of Dryden no poetical diction, no system of words at once refined from the gross- 20 ness of domestic use, and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts. Words too familiar, or too remote, defeat the purpose of a poet. From those sounds which we hear on small or on coarse occasions, we do not easily receive strong impressions, or delightful images, and words to which we are nearly strangers, whenever they occur, draw that attention on themselves which they should transmit to things.

Those happy combinations of words which distinguish poetry from prose had been rarely attempted. we had few 30 elegancies or flowers of speech, the roses had not yet been plucked from the bramble, or different colours had not been joined to enliven one another.

It may be doubted whether Waller and Denham could have overborne the prejudices which had long prevailed, and which even then were sheltered by the protection of

Cowley. 'The new versification, as it was called, may be considered as owing its establishment to Dryden; from whose time it is apparent that English poetry has had no tendency to relapse to its former savageness.

The affluence and comprehension of our language is very illustriously displayed in our poetical translations of ancient writers; a work which the French seem to relinquish in despair, and which we were long unable to perform with dexterity. Ben Jonson thought it necessary to copy Horace  
 10 almost word by word; Feltham, his contemporary and adversary, considers it as indispensably requisite in a translation to give line for line. It is said, that Sandys, whom Dryden calls the best versifier of the last age, has struggled hard to comprise every book of his English Metamorphoses in the same number of verses with the original. Holyday had nothing in view but to show that he understood his author, with so little regard to the grandeur of his diction, or the volubility of his numbers, that his metres can hardly be called verses; they cannot be read without reluctance, nor  
 20 will the labour always be rewarded by understanding them. Cowley saw that such copiers were a servile race; he asserted his liberty, and spread his wings so boldly that he left his authors. It was reserved for Dryden to fix the limits of poetical liberty, and give us just rules and examples of translation.

When languages are formed upon different principles, it is impossible that the same modes of expression should always be elegant in both. While they run on together, the closest translation may be considered as the best; but when  
 30 they divaricate, each must take its natural course. Where correspondence cannot be obtained, it is necessary to be content with something equivalent. "Translation, therefore," says Dryden, "is not so loose as paraphrase, nor so close as metaphrase."

All polished languages have different styles; the concise, the diffuse, the lofty, and the humble. In the proper choice

of style consists the resemblance which Dryden principally exacts from the translator. He is to exhibit his author's thoughts in such a dress of diction as the author would have given them, had his language been English: rugged magnificence is not to be softened; hyperbolical ostentation is not to be repressed; nor sententious affectation to have its points blunted. A translator is to be like his author; it is not his business to excel him.

The reasonableness of these rules seems sufficient for their vindication; and the effects produced by observing them were so happy, that I know not whether they were ever opposed by Sir Edward Sherburne, a man whose learning was greater than his powers of poetry, and who, being better qualified to give the meaning than the spirit of Seneca, has introduced his version of three tragedies by a defence of close translation. The authority of Horace, which the new translators cited in defence of their practice, he has, by a judicious explanation, taken fairly from them, but reason wants not Horace to support it.

It seldom happens that all the necessary causes concur to any great effect: will is wanting to power, or power to will, or both are impeded by external obstructions. The exigencies in which Dryden was condemned to pass his life are reasonably supposed to have blasted his genius, to have driven out his works in a state of immaturity, and to have intercepted the full-blown elegance which longer growth would have supplied.

Poverty, like other rigid powers, is sometimes too hastily accused. If the excellence of Dryden's works was lessened by his indigence, their number was increased; and I know not how it will be proved, that if he had written less he would have written better; or that indeed he would have undergone the toil of an author, if he had not been solicited by something more pressing than the love of praise.

But, as is said by his Sebastian,

We know that Dryden's several productions were so many successive expedients for his support; his plays were therefore often borrowed; and his poems were almost all occasional.

In an occasional performance no height of excellence can be expected from any mind, however fertile in itself, and however stored with acquisitions. He whose work is general and arbitrary has the choice of his matter, and takes that which his inclination and his studies have best qualified him to display and decorate. He is at liberty to delay his publication till he has satisfied his friends and himself, till he has reformed his first thoughts by subsequent examination, and polished away those faults which the precipitance of ardent composition is likely to leave behind it. Virgil is related to have poured out a great number of lines in the morning, and to have passed the day in reducing them to fewer.

The occasional poet is circumscribed by the narrowness of his subject. Whatever can happen to man has happened so often that little remains for fancy or invention. We have been all born; we have most of us been married; and so many have died before us, that our deaths can supply but few materials for a poet. In the fate of princes the public has an interest; and what happens to them of good or evil, the poets have always considered as business for the Muse. But after so many inaugural gratulations, nuptial hymns, and funeral dirges, he must be highly favoured by nature, or by fortune, who says anything not said before. Even war and conquest, however splendid, suggest no new images; the triumphal chariot of a victorious monarch can be decked only with those ornaments that have graced his predecessors.

Not only matter but time is wanting. The poem must not be delayed till the occasion is forgotten. The lucky moments of animated imagination cannot be attended; elegances and illustrations cannot be multiplied by gradual accumulation; the composition must be despatched while

conversation is yet busy, and admiration fresh; and haste is to be made, lest some other event should lay hold upon mankind.

Occasional compositions may however secure to a writer the praise both of learning and facility; for they cannot be the effect of long study and must be furnished immediately from the treasures of the mind.

The death of Cromwell was the first public event which called forth Dryden's poetical powers. His heroic stanzas have beauties and defects; the thoughts are vigorous, and, though not always proper, show a mind replete with ideas; the numbers are smooth; and the diction, if not altogether correct, is elegant and easy.

Davenant was perhaps at this time his favourite author, though Gondibert never appears to have been popular; and from Davenant he learned to please his ear with the stanza of four lines alternately rhymed.

Dryden very early formed his versification; there are in this early production no traces of Donne's or Jonson's ruggedness; but he did not so soon free his mind from the ambition of forced conceits. In his verses on the Restoration, he says of the King's exile,

He, toss'd by Fate—  
Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age.  
But found his life too true a pilgrimage.

And afterwards, to show how virtue and wisdom are increased by adversity, he makes this remark

Well might the ancient poets then confer  
On Night the honour'd name of *counsellor*,  
Since, struck with rays of prosperous fortune blind,  
We light alone in dark afflictions find. 30

His praise of Monk's dexterity comprises such a cluster of thoughts unallied to one another, as will not elsewhere be easily found.

True Monk, whom Providence designed to loose  
Those real bonds false freedom did impose.

The blessed saints that watch'd this turning scene,  
Did from their stars with joyful wonder lean,  
To see small clues draw vastest weights along,  
Not in their bulk, but in their order strong.  
Thus pencils can by one slight touch restore  
Smiles to that changed face that wept before.  
With ease such fond chimeras we pursue,  
As fancy frames for fancy to subdue :  
But, when ourselves to action we betake,  
It shuns the mint like gold that chymists make :  
How hard was then his task, at once to be  
What in the body natural we see !  
Man's Architect distinctly did ordain  
The charge of muscles, nerves, and of the brain,  
Through viewless conduits spirits to dispense  
The springs of motion from the seat of sense.  
'Twas not the hasty product of a day,  
But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay.  
He, like a patient angler, ere he strook,  
Would let them play a-while upon the hook.  
Our healthful food the stomach labours thus,  
At first embracing what it straight doth crush.  
Wise leeches will not vain receipts obtrude,  
While growing pains pronounce the humours crude ;  
Deaf to complaints, they wait upon the ill,  
Till some safe crisis authorize their skill.

He had not yet learned, indeed he never learned well, to  
forbear the improper use of mythology. After having re-  
warded the heathen deities for their care,

With Alga who the sacred altar strows?  
To all the sea-gods Charles an offering owes ;  
A bull to thee, Portunus, shall be slain ;  
A ram to you, ye Tempests of the Main.

He tells us, in the language of religion,

Prayer storm'd the skies, and ravish'd Charles from thence,  
As heaven itself is took by violence.

And afterwards mentions one of the most awful passages of

Sacred History. Other conceits there are, too curious to be quite omitted; as,

For by example most we sinn'd before,  
And, glass like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore.

How far he was yet from thinking it necessary to sound his sentiments on nature, appears from the extravagance of his fictions and hyperboles:

The winds, that never moderation knew,  
Afraid to blow too much, too faintly blew;  
Or, out of breath with joy, could not enlarge  
Their straiten'd lungs.—

It is no longer motion cheats your view;  
As you meet it, the land approacheth you;  
The land returns, and in the white it wears  
The marks of penitence and sorrow bears.

I know not whether this fancy, however little be its value, was not borrowed. A French poet read to Malherbe some verses, in which he represents France as moving out of its place to receive the King. "Though this," said Malherbe, "was in my time, I do not remember it."

His poem on the Coronation has a more even tenour of thought. Some lines deserve to be quoted

You have already quench'd sedition's brand,  
And zeal, that burnt it, only warms the land;  
The jealous sects that durst not trust their cause  
So far from their own will as to the laws,  
Him for their umpire and their synod take,  
And their appeal alone to Caesar make.

Here may be found one particle of that old versification, of which, I believe, in all his works, there is not another.

Nor is it duty, or our hope alone,  
Creates that joy, but full fruition.

In the verses to the Lord Chancellor Clarendon, two years afterwards, is a couplet as beautiful as the first; and the first

would have attempted it ; and so successfully laboured, that though at last it gives the reader more perplexity than pleasure, and seems hardly worth the study that it costs, yet it must be valued as a proof of a mind at once subtle and comprehensive :

In open prospect nothing bounds our eye,  
Until the earth seems join'd unto the sky :  
So in this hemisphere our utmost view  
Is only bounded by our king and you :  
Our sight is limited where you are join'd,  
And beyond that no farther Heaven can find.  
So well your virtues do with his agree,  
That though your orbs of different greatness be,  
Yet both are for each other's use disposed.  
His to enclose, and yours to be enclosed.  
Nor could another in your room have been,  
Except an emptiness had come between.

The comparison of the Chancellor to the Indies leaves all resemblance too far behind it :

And as the Indies were not found before  
Those rich perfumes which from the happy shore  
The winds upon their balmy wings conveyed,  
Whose guilty sweetness first their world betray'd ;  
So by your counsels we are brought to view  
A new and undiscover'd world in you.

There is another comparison, for there is little else in the poem, of which, though perhaps it cannot be explained into plain prosaic meaning, the mind perceives enough to be delighted, and readily forgives its obscurity for its magnificence :

How strangely active are the arts of peace,  
Whose restless motions less than wars do cease :  
Peace is not freed from labour, but from noise ;  
And war more force, but not more pains employs.  
Such is the mighty swiftness of your mind,  
That, like the earth's, it leaves our sense behind,  
While you so smoothly turn and rowl our sphere,  
That rapid motion does but rest appear.

For as in nature's swiftness, with the throng  
Of flying orbs while ours is borne along,  
All seems at rest to the deluded eye,  
Mov'd by the soul of the same harmony;  
So carry'd on by our unwearied care,  
We rest in peace, and yet in motion share.

To this succeed four lines, which perhaps afford Dryden's first attempt at those penetrating remarks on human nature, for which he seems to have been peculiarly formed :

10

Let envy then those crimes within you see,  
From which the happy never must be free;  
Envy that does with misery reside,  
The joy and the revenge of ruin'd pride

Into this poem he seems to have collected all his powers; and after this he did not often bring upon his avail such stubborn and unmanageable thoughts, but, as a specimen of his abilities to unite the most unsociable matter, he has concluded with lines of which I think not myself obliged to tell the meaning

20

Yet unimpair'd with labours, or with time,  
Your age but seems to a new youth to climb.  
Thus heavenly bodies do our time begot,  
And measure change, but share no part of it  
And still it shall without a weight increase,  
Like this new year, whose motions never cease.  
For since the glorious course you have begun  
Is led by Charles, as that is by the sun,  
It must both weightless and immortal prove,  
Because the centre of it is above

In the *Annus Mirabilis* he returned to the quatrain, which 30 from that time he totally quitted, perhaps from this experience of its inconvenience, for he complains of its difficulty. This is one of his greatest attempts. He had subjects equal to his abilities, a great naval war, and the Fire of London. Battles have always been described in heroic poetry, but a sea-fight and artillery had yet something of novelty. New arts are long in the world before poets describe them, for

they borrow everything from their predecessors, and commonly derive very little from nature or from life. Boileau was the first French writer that had ever hazarded in verse the mention of modern war, or the effects of gunpowder. We, who are less afraid of novelty, had already possession of those dreadful images: Waller had described a sea-fight. Milton had not yet transferred the invention of fire-arms to the rebellious angels.

This poem is written with great diligence, yet does not 10 fully answer the expectation raised by such subjects and such a writer. With the stanza of Davenant he has sometimes his vein of parenthesis, and incidental disquisition, and stops his narrative for a wise remark.

The general fault is, that he affords more sentiment than description, and does not so much impress scenes upon the fancy, as deduce consequences and make comparisons.

The initial stanzas have rather too much resemblance to the first lines of Waller's poem on the war with Spain; perhaps such a beginning is natural, and could not be avoided 20 without affectation. Both Waller and Dryden might take their hint from the poem on the civil war of Rome, "*Orbem jam totum,*" etc.

Of the king collecting his navy, he says,

It seems as every ship their sovereign knows,  
His awful summons they so soon obey;  
So hear the scaly herds when Proteus blows,  
And so to pasture follow through the sea.

It would not be hard to believe that Dryden had written the two first lines seriously, and that some wag had added 30 the two latter in burlesque. Who would expect the lines that immediately follow, which are indeed perhaps indecently hyperbolic, but certainly in a mode totally different?

To see this fleet upon the ocean move,  
Angels drew wide the curtains of the skies;  
And Heaven, as if there wanted lights above,  
For tapers made two glaring comets rise.



betrayed them. The *husband* and the *lover*, though of more dignity than the *castor*, are images too domestic to mingle properly with the horrors of war. The two quatrains that follow are worthy of the author.

The account of the different sensations with which the two fleets retired, when the night parted them, is one of the fairest flowers of English poetry :

- 10           The night comes on, we eager to pursue  
               The combat still, and they asham'd to leave :  
               'Till the last streaks of dying day withdrew,  
               And doubtful moonlight did our rage deceive.
- In th' English fleet each ship resounds with joy,  
               And loud applause of their great leader's fame :  
               In fiery dreams the Dutch they still destroy,  
               And, slumbering, smile at the imagined flame.
- Not so the Holland fleet, who, tired and done,  
               Stretch'd on their decks, like weary oxen lie :  
               Faint sweats all down their mighty members run,  
               (Vast bulks, which little souls but ill supply).
- 20           In dreams they fearful precipices tread,  
               Or, shipwreck'd, labour to some distant shore :  
               Or, in dark churches, walk among the dead ;  
               They wake with horror, and dare sleep no more.

- It is a general rule in poetry, that all appropriated terms of art should be sunk in general expressions, because poetry is to speak an universal language. This rule is still stronger with regard to arts not liberal, or confined to few, and therefore far removed from common knowledge ; and of this kind, certainly is technical navigation. Yet Dryden was of opinion,
- 30   that a sea-fight ought to be described in the nautical language ; "and certainly," says he, "as those, who in a logical disputation keep to general terms, would hide a fallacy, so those who do it in any poetical description would veil their ignorance."

Let us then appeal to experience ; for by experience at last we learn as well what will please as what will profit. In

the battle, his terms seem to have been blown away ; but he deals them liberally in the dock :

So here some pick out bullets from the side,  
Some drive old oaks thro' each seam and rift:  
Their left hand does the calking-iron guide,  
The rattling mallet with the right they lift.

With boiling pitch another near at hand  
(From friendly Sweden brought) the seams instops;  
Which, well laid o'er, the salt-sea waves withstand,  
And shake them from the rising beak in drops.

Some the gall'd ropes with dauby marling blind,  
Or sear-cloth masts with strong tarpauling coats -  
To try new shrouds one mounts into the wind,  
And one below their ease or stiffness notes.

I suppose here is not one term which every reader does not wish away

His digression to the original and progress of navigation, with his prospect of the advancement which it shall receive from the Royal Society, then newly instituted, may be considered as an example seldom equalled of seasonable excursion and artful return.

One line, however, leaves me discontented ; he says, that, by the help of the philosophers,

Instructed ships shall sail to quick commerce,  
By which remotest regions are allied—

Which he is constrained to explain in a note, "by a more exact measure of longitude" It had better become Dryden's learning and genius to have laboured science into poetry, and have shown, by explaining longitude, that verse did not refuse the ideas of philosophy

His description of the Fire is painted by resolute meditation, out of a mind better formed to reason than to feel. The conflagration of a city, with all its tumults of concomitant distress, is one of the most dreadful spectacles which this world can offer to human eyes ; yet it seems to raise little

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emotion in the breast of the poet; he watches the flame coolly from street to street, with now a reflection, and now a simile, till at last he meets the king, for whom he makes a speech, rather tedious in a time so busy; and then follows again the progress of the fire.

There are, however, in this part some passages that deserve attention; as in the beginning:

10           The diligence of trades and noiseful gain,  
              And luxury, more late asleep were laid;  
              All was the Night's, and in her silent reign  
              No sound the rest of Nature did invade  
              In this deep quiet—

The expression "All was the Night's" is taken from Seneca, who remarks on Virgil's line,

*Omnia noctis erant placida composita quiete,*

that he might have concluded better,

*Omnia noctis erant.*

The following quatrain is vigorous and animated:

20           The ghosts of traitors from the bridge descend  
              With bold fanatic spectres to rejoice;  
              About the fire into a dance they bend,  
              And sing their sabbath notes with feeble voice.

His prediction of the improvements which shall be made in the new city is elegant and poetical, and with an event which poets cannot always boast has been happily verified. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted.

Dryden, when he wrote this poem, seems not yet fully to have formed his versification, or settled his system of 30 propriety.

From this time he addicted himself almost wholly to the stage, "to which," says he, "my genius never much inclined me," merely as the most profitable market for poetry. By

writing tragedies in rhyme, he continued to improve his diction and his numbers. According to the opinion of Harte, who had studied his works with great attention, he settled his principles of versification in 1676, when he produced the play of *Aureng Zebe*; and according to his own account of the short time in which he wrote *Tyrannic Love*, and the *State of Innocence*, he soon obtained the full effect of diligence, and added facility to exactness.

Rhyme has been so long banished from the theatre, that we know not its effect upon the passions of an audience; but 10 it has this convenience, that sentences stand more independent on each other, and striking passages are therefore easily selected and retained. Thus the description of Night in the *Indian Emperor*, and the rise and fall of empire in the *Conquest of Granada*, are more frequently repeated than any lines in *All for Love* or *Don Sebastian*.

To search his plays for vigorous sallies and sententious elegances, or to fix the dates of any little pieces which he wrote by chance, or by solicitation, were labour too tedious and minute. 20

His dramatic labours did not so wholly absorb his thoughts, but that he promulgated the laws of translation in a preface to the *English Epistles of Ovid*, one of which he translated himself, and another in conjunction with the *Earl of Mulgrave*.

*Abalom and Achitophel* is a work so well known, that particular criticism is superfluous. If it be considered as a poem political and controversial, it will be found to comprise all the excellences of which the subject is susceptible; acrimony of censure, elegance of praise, artful delineation of 30 characters, variety and vigour of sentiment, happy turns of language, and pleasing harmony of numbers; and all these raised to such a height as can scarcely be found in any other English composition.

It is not, however, without faults, some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreverently licentious. The

original structure of the poem was defective ; allegories drawn to great length will always break ; Charles could not run continually parallel with David.

The subject had likewise another inconvenience : it admitted little imagery or description ; and a long poem of mere sentiments easily becomes tedious ; though all the parts are forcible, and every line kindles new rapture, the reader, if not relieved by the interposition of something that soothes the fancy, grows weary of admiration, and defers the rest.

As an approach to historical truth was necessary, the action and catastrophe were not in the poet's power ; there is therefore an unpleasing disproportion between the beginning and the end. We are alarmed by a faction formed out of many sects, various in their principles, but agreeing in their purpose of mischief, formidable for their numbers, and strong by their supports ; while the king's friends are few and weak. The chiefs on either part are set forth to view ; but when expectation is at the height, the king makes a speech, and

Henceforth a series of new times began.

Who can forbear to think of an enchanted castle, with a wide moat and lofty battlements, walls of marble and gates of brass which vanishes at once into air, when the destined knight blows his horn before it ?

In the second part, written by Tate, there is a long insertion, which, for poignancy of satire, exceeds any part of the former. Personal resentment, though no laudable motive to satire, can add great force to general principles. Self-love is a busy prompter.

The Medal, written upon the same principles with Absalom and Achitophel, but upon a narrower plan, gives less pleasure, though it discovers equal abilities in the writer. The superstructure cannot extend beyond the foundation ; a single character or incident cannot furnish as many ideas,



He had been a little inclined to merriment before, upon the prayers of a nation for their dying sovereign; nor was he serious enough to keep heathen fables out of his religion:

With him th' innumerable crowd of armed prayers  
 Knock'd at the gates of heaven, and knock'd aloud;  
*The first well-meaning rude petitioners*  
 All for his life assail'd the throne,  
 All would have brib'd the skies by offering up their own.  
 So great a throng not heaven itself could bar;  
 'Twas almost borne by force as in the giants war.  
 The pray'rs, at least, for his reprieve were heard;  
 His death, like Hezekiah's, was deferr'd.

There is throughout the composition a desire of splendour without wealth. In the conclusion he seems too much pleased with the prospect of the new reign to have lamented his old master with much sincerity.

He did not miscarry in this attempt for want of skill either in lyric or elegiac poetry. His poem on the death of Mrs. Killigrew is undoubtedly the noblest ode that our language ever has produced. The first part flows with a torrent of enthusiasm. *Fervet immensusque ruit.* All the stanzas indeed are not equal. An imperial crown cannot be one continued diamond. The gems must be held together by some less valuable matter.

In his first ode for Cecilia's day, which is lost in the splendour of the second, there are passages which would have dignified any other poet. The first stanza is vigorous and elegant, though the word *diapason* is too technical, and the rhymes are too remote from one another.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,  
 This universal frame began:  
 When nature underneath a heap of jarring atoms lay,  
 And could not heave her head,  
 The tuneful voice was heard from high,  
 Arise ye more than dead.  
 Then cold and hot, and moist and dry,



Yet unemploy'd no minute slipp'd away ;  
 Moments were precious in so short a stay.  
 The haste of Heaven to have her was so great,  
 That some were single acts, though each complete ; }  
 And every act stood ready to repeat.

This piece, however, is not without its faults ; there is so much likeness in the initial comparison, that there is no illustration. As a king would be lamented, Eleonora was lamented :

- 10      As when some great and gracious monarch dies,  
           Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs rise  
           Among the sad attendants ; then the sound  
           Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,  
           Through town and country, till the dreadful blast  
           Is blown to distant colonies at last ;  
           Who, then, perhaps, were offering vows in vain,  
           For his long life, and for his happy reign :  
           So slowly, by degrees, unwilling Fame,  
           Did matchless Eleonora's fate proclaim }  
 20      Till public as the loss the news became.

This is little better than to say in praise of a shrub, that it is as green as a tree ; or of a brook, that it waters a garden, as a river waters a country.

Dryden confesses that he did not know the lady whom he celebrates : the praise being therefore inevitably general, fixes no impression upon the reader, nor excites any tendency to love, nor much desire of imitation. Knowledge of the subject is to the poet what durable materials are to the architect.

- The *Religio Laici*, which borrows its title from the *Religio*  
 30 *Medici* of Browne, is almost the only work of Dryden which can be considered as a voluntary effusion ; in this, therefore, it might be hoped, that the full effulgence of his genius would be found. But unhappily the subject is rather argumentative than poetical ; he intended only a specimen of metrical disputation :

And this unpolish'd rugged verse I chose,  
 As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.



supposed to exhibit, negligence excepted, his deliberate and ultimate scheme of metre.

We may therefore reasonably infer, that he did not approve the perpetual uniformity which confines the sense to couplets, since he has broken his lines in the initial paragraph.

- A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,  
 Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged :  
 Without unspotted, innocent within,  
 0 She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.  
 Yet had she oft been chased with horns and hounds,  
 And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds  
 Aim'd at her heart ; was often forced to fly,  
 And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

These lines are lofty, elegant, and musical, notwithstanding the interruption of the pause, of which the effect is rather increase of pleasure by variety, than offence by ruggedness.

To the first part it was his intention, he says, "to give the majestic turn of heroic poesy"; and perhaps he might have  
 20 executed his design not unsuccessfully, had not an opportunity of satire, which he cannot forbear, fallen sometimes in his way. The character of a Presbyterian, whose emblem is the Wolf, is not very heroically majestic :

More haughty than the rest, the wolfish race }  
 Appear with belly gaunt and famish'd face ; }  
 Never was so deform'd a beast of grace.  
 His ragged tail betwixt his legs he wears,  
 Close clapp'd for shame ; but his rough crest he rears, }  
 And pricks up his predestinating ears.

30 His general character of the other sorts of beasts that never go to church, though sprightly and keen, has, however, not much of heroic poesy :

These are the chief ; to number o'er the rest,  
 And stand like Adam naming every beast,  
 Were weary work ; nor will the Muse describe  
 A slimy-born, and sun-begotten tribe,

Who, far from steeples and their sacred sound,

But, if they think at all, 'tis sure no higher  
Than matter, put in motion, may aspire ;  
Souls that can scarce ferment their mass of clay ; }  
So drossy, so divisible are they, }  
As would but serve pure bodies for allay :  
Such souls as shards produce, such beetle things  
As only buzz to heaven with evening wings ;  
Strike in the dark, offending but by chance ;  
Such are the blindfold blows of ignorance  
They know not beings, and but hate a name ;  
To them the Hind and Panther are the same.

10

One more instance, and that taken from the narrative part, where style was more in his choice, will show how steadily he kept his resolution of heroic dignity

For when the herd, suffic'd, did late repair  
To ferny heaths and to their forest lair,  
She made a mannerly excuse to stay,  
Proffering the Hind to wait her half the way  
That, since the sky was clear, an hour of talk  
Might help her to beguile the tedious walk  
With much good will the motion was embraced,  
To chat awhile on their adventures past  
Nor had the grateful Hind so soon forgot  
Her friend and fellow-sufferer in the plot  
Yet, wondering how of late she grew estranged,  
Her forehead cloudy and her count'nance changed,  
She thought this hour th' occasion would present  
To learn her secret cause of discontent,  
Which well she hoped might be with ease redress'd  
Considering her a well bred civil beast,  
And more a gentlewoman than the rest  
After some common talk what rumours ran,  
The lady of the spotted muff began

20

The second and third parts he professes to have to diction more familiar and more suitable to disj

conversation; the difference is not, however, very easily perceived; the first has familiar, and the two others have sonorous, lines. The original incongruity runs through the whole; the King is now *Cæsar*, and now the *Lyon*; and the name *Pan* is given to the Supreme Being.

But when this constitutional absurdity is forgiven, the poem must be confessed to be written with great smoothness of metre, a wide extent of knowledge, and an abundant multiplicity of images; the controversy is embellished with  
10 pointed sentences, diversified by illustrations, and enlivened by sallies of invective. Some of the facts to which allusions are made are now become obscure, and perhaps there may be many satirical passages little understood.

As it was by its nature a work of defiance, a composition which would naturally be examined with the utmost acrimony of criticism, it was probably laboured with uncommon attention, and there are, indeed, few negligences in the subordinate parts. The original impropriety, and the  
20 subsequent unpopularity of the subject, added to the ridiculousness of its first elements, has sunk it into neglect; but it may be usefully studied, as an example of poetical ratiocination, in which the argument suffers little from the metre.

In the poem on the Birth of the Prince of Wales, nothing is very remarkable but the exorbitant adulation, and that insensibility of the precipice on which the king was then standing, which the laureate apparently shared with the rest of the courtiers. A few months cured him of controversy, dismissed him from court, and made him again a playwright  
30 and translator.

Of Juvenal there had been a translation by Stapylton, and another by Holiday; neither of them is very poetical. Stapylton is more smooth; and Holiday's is more esteemed for the learning of his notes. A new version was proposed to the poets of that time and undertaken by them in conjunction. The main design was conducted by Dryden, whose

reputation was such that no man was unwilling to serve the Muses under him.

The general character of this translation will be given, when it is said to preserve the wit, but to want the dignity, of the original. The peculiarity of Juvenal is a mixture of gaiety and stateliness, of pointed sentences, and declamatory grandeur. His points have not been neglected; but his grandeur none of the band seemed to consider as necessary to be imitated, except Creech, who undertook the thirteenth satire. It is therefore perhaps possible to give a better 10 representation of that great satirist, even in those parts which Dryden himself has translated, some passages excepted, which will never be excelled.

With Juvenal was published Persius, translated wholly by Dryden. This work, though like all the other productions of Dryden it may have shining parts, seems to have been written merely for wages, in an uniform mediocrity, without any eager endeavour after excellence, or laborious effort of the mind.

There wanders an opinion among the readers of poetry, that one of these satires is an exercise of the school. Dryden 20 says that he once translated it at school; but not that he preserved or published the juvenile performance.

Not long afterwards he undertook perhaps the most arduous work of its kind, a translation of Virgil, for which he had shown how well he was qualified by his version of the *Pollio*, and two episodes, one of *Nisus and Euryalus*, the other of *Mezentius and Lausus*.

In the comparison of Homer and Virgil, the discriminative excellence of Homer is elevation and comprehension of thought, and that of Virgil is grace and splendour of diction. 30 The beauties of Homer are therefore difficult to be lost, and those of Virgil difficult to be retained. The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away. The author, having the choice of his own images, selects those which he can best adorn; the translator must, at all hazards, follow his original, and

express thoughts which perhaps he would not have chosen. When to this primary difficulty is added the inconvenience of a language so much inferior in harmony to the Latin, it cannot be expected that they who read the *Georgic* and the *Eneid* should be much delighted with any version.

All these obstacles Dryden saw, and all these he determined to encounter. The expectation of his work was undoubtedly great; the nation considered its honour as interested in the event. One gave him the different editions  
10 of his author, and another helped him in the subordinate parts. The arguments of the several books were given him by Addison.

The hopes of the public were not disappointed. He produced, says Pope, "the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language." It certainly excelled whatever had appeared in English, and appears to have satisfied his friends, and, for the most part, to have silenced his enemies. Milbourne, indeed, a clergyman, attacked it; but  
20 his outrages seem to be the ebullitions of a mind agitated by stronger resentment than bad poetry can excite, and previously resolved not to be pleased.

When admiration had subsided, the translation was more coolly examined, and found, like all others, to be sometimes erroneous, and sometimes licentious. Those who could find faults, thought they could avoid them; and Dr. Brady attempted in blank verse a translation of the *Eneid*, which, when dragged into the world, did not live long enough to cry. I have never seen it; but that such a version there is, or has been, perhaps some old catalogue informed me.

30 With not much better success, Trapp, when his *Tragedy* and his *Preflections* had given him reputation, attempted another blank version of the *Eneid*; to which, notwithstanding the slight regard with which it was treated, he had afterwards perseverance enough to add the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. His book may continue its existence as long as it is the clandestine refuge of school-boys.

Since the English ear has been accustomed to the mellifluousness of Pope's numbers, and the diction of poetry has become more splendid, new attempts have been made to translate Virgil; and all his works have been attempted by men better qualified to contend with Dryden. I will not engage myself in an invidious comparison, by opposing one passage to another; a work of which there would be no end, and which might be often offensive without use.

It is not by comparing line with line that the merit of great works is to be estimated, but by their general effects 10 and ultimate result. It is easy to note a weak line, and write one more vigorous in its place, to find a happiness of expression in the original, and transplant it by force into the version; but what is given to the parts may be subducted from the whole, and the reader may be weary, though the critic may commend. Works of imagination excel by their allurements and delight, by their power of attracting and detaining the attention. That book is good in vain, which the reader throws away. He only is the master, who keeps the mind in pleasing captivity, whose pages are perused 20 with eagerness, and in hope of new pleasure are perused again; and whose conclusion is perceived with an eye of sorrow, such as the traveller casts upon departing day.

By his proportion of this predominance I will consent that Dryden should be tried, of this, which, in opposition to reason, makes Ariosto the darling and the pride of Italy; of this, which, in defiance of criticism, continues Shakspeare the sovereign of the drama.

His last work was his Fables, in which he gave us the first example of a mode of writing which the Italians call *refacimento*, a renovation of ancient writers, by modernizing their language. Thus the old poem of Boiardo has been new-dressed by Domenichi and Berni. The works of Chaucer, upon which this kind of rejuvenescence has been bestowed by Dryden, require little criticism. The tale of the Cock seems hardly worth revival, and the story of Palamon and

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Arcite, containing an action unsuitable to the times in which it is placed, can hardly be suffered to pass without censure of the hyperbolical commendation which Dryden has given it in the general Preface, and in a poetical Dedication, a piece where his original fondness of remote conceits seems to have revived.

Of the three pieces, borrowed from Boccace, Sigismunda may be defended by the celebrity of the story. Theodore and Honoria, though it contains not much moral, yet afforded  
 10 opportunities of striking description. And Cymon was formerly a tale of such reputation, that at the revival of letters it was translated into Latin by one of the Beroalds.

Whatever subjects employed his pen, he was still improving our measures and embellishing our language.

In this volume are interspersed some short original poems, which, with his prologues, epilogues, and songs, may be comprised in Congreve's remark, that even those, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to the praise of excellence in his kind.

20 One composition must however be distinguished. The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, perhaps the last effort of his poetry, has been always considered as exhibiting the highest flight of fancy, and the exactest nicety of art. This is allowed to stand without a rival. If indeed there is any excellence beyond it, in some other of Dryden's works that excellence must be found. Compared with the ode on Killigrew, it may be pronounced perhaps superior in the whole, but without any single part equal to the first stanza of the other.

It is said to have cost Dryden a fortnight's labour; but it  
 30 does not want its negligences; some of the lines are without correspondent rhymes; a defect which I never detected but after an acquaintance of many years, and which the enthusiasm of the writer might hinder him from perceiving.

His last stanza has less emotion than the former; but is not less elegant in the diction. The conclusion is vicious; the music of Timotheus, which *raised a mortal to the skies*,

had only a metaphorical power ; that of *Cecilia*, which *drew an angel down*, had a real effect : the crown therefore could not reasonably be divided.

In a general survey of Dryden's labours, he appears to have a mind very comprehensive by nature, and much enriched with acquired knowledge. His compositions are the effects of a vigorous genius operating upon large materials.

The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted ; and seldom describes them but as they are complicated by the various relations of society, and confused the tumults and agitations of life.

What he says of love may contribute to the explanation of his character

Love various minds does variously inspire  
It stirs in gentle bosoms gentle fire,  
Like that of incense on the altar laid ;  
But raging flames tempestuous souls invade,  
A fire which every windy passion blows,  
With pride it mounts, or with revenge it glows

Dryden's was not one of the *gentle bosoms*. Love, as subsists in itself, with no tendency but to the person loved and wishing only for correspondent kindness, such Love shuts out all other interest, the Love of the Golden Age, was too soft and subtle to put his faculties in motion. He hardly conceived it but in its turbulent effervescence with some other desires ; when it was inflamed by rivalry, or obstructed by difficulties ; when it invigorated ambition, or exasperated revenge.

He is therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic, and had so little sensibility of the power

effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others. Simplicity gave him no pleasure; and for the first part of his life he looked on Otway with contempt, though at last, indeed very late, he confessed that in his play *there was Nature, which is the chief beauty.*

We do not always know our own motives. I am not certain whether it was not rather the difficulty which he found in exhibiting the genuine operations of the heart than a servile submission to an injudicious audience, that filled his plays with false magnificence. It was necessary to fix attention; and the mind can be captivated only by recollection, or by curiosity; by reviving natural sentiments, or impressing new appearances of things: sentences were readier at his call than images; he could more easily fill the ear with some splendid novelty than awaken those ideas that slumber in the heart.

The favourite exercise of his mind was ratiocination; and, that argument might not be too soon at an end, he delighted to talk of liberty and necessity, destiny and contingency; these he discusses in the language of the school with so much profundity, that the terms which he uses are not always understood. It is indeed learning, but learning out of place.

When once he had engaged himself in disputation, thoughts flowed in on either side: he was now no longer at a loss; he had always objections and solutions at command; *verbaque provisam rem*—give him matter for his verse, and he finds without difficulty verse for his matter.

In Comedy, for which he professes himself not naturally qualified, the mirth which he excites will perhaps not be found so much to arise from any original humour, or peculiarity of character nicely distinguished and diligently pursued, as from incidents and circumstances, artifices and surprises; from jests of action rather than of sentiment. What he had of humorous or passionate, he seems to have had not from nature, but from other poets; if not always as a plagiary, at least as an imitator.

Next to argument, his delight was in wild and daring sallies of sentiment, in the irregular and eccentric violence of wit. He delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning, where light and darkness begin to mingle; to approach the precipice of absurdity, and hover over the abyss of unideal vacancy. This inclination sometimes produced nonsense, which he knew: as

Move swiftly, Sun, and fly a lover's pace,  
Leave weeks and months behind thee in thy race,

Amarel flies

To guard thee from the demons of the air;  
My flaming sword above them to display,  
All keen, and ground upon the edge of day

And sometimes it issued in absurdities, of which perhaps was not conscious:

Then we upon our orb's last verge shall go,  
And see the ocean leaning on the sky;  
From thence our rolling neighbours we shall know,  
And on the lunar world securely pry

These lines have no meaning; but may we not say, imitation of Cowley on another lock,

'Tis so like *some* 'twill serve the turn as well'

This endeavour after the grand and the new produces many sentiments either great or bulky, and many images either just or splendid

I am as free as Nature first made man,  
Ere the base laws of servitude began,  
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

—'Tis but because the living death ne'er knew,  
They fear to prove it as a thing that's new:  
Let me th' experiment before you try,  
I'll show you first how easy 'tis to die.

—There with a forest of their darts he strove,  
And stood like Capaneus defying Jove;

With his broad sword the boldest beating down,  
While Fate grew pale lest he should win the town,  
And turn'd the iron leaves of his dark book  
To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook.

—I beg no pity for this mouldering clay ;  
For if you give it burial, there it takes  
Possession of your earth ;  
If burnt, and scatter'd in the air, the winds  
That strew my dust diffuse my royalty,  
10 And spread me o'er your clime ; for where one atom  
Of mine shall light, know there Sebastian reigns.

Of these quotations the two first may be allowed to be great, the two latter only tumid.

Of such selection there is no end. I will add only a few more passages, of which the first, though it may perhaps not be quite clear in prose, is not too obscure for poetry, as the meaning that it has is noble :

No, there is a necessity in Fate,  
20 Why still the brave bold man is fortunate ;  
He keeps his object ever full in sight ;  
And that assurance holds him firm and right ;  
True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,  
But right before there is no precipice ;  
Fear makes men look aside, and so their footing miss.

Of the images which the two following citations afford, the first is elegant, the second magnificent ; whether either be just, let the reader judge :

What precious drops are these,  
30 Which silently each other's track pursue,  
Bright as young diamonds in their infant dew ?

—Resign your castle—  
—Enter, brave sir ; for, when you speak the word,  
The gates shall open of their own accord ;  
The genius of the place its lord shall meet,  
And bow its towery forehead at your feet.

These bursts of extravagance Dryden calls the "Dalilabs"

of the theatre; and owns that many noisy lines of Maxamin and Almanzor call out for vengeance upon him; "but I knew," says he, "that they were bad enough to please, even when I wrote them." There is surely reason to suspect that he pleased himself as well as his audience; and that these, like the harlots of other men, had his love, though not his approbation.

He had sometimes faults of a less generous and splendid kind. He makes, like almost all other poets, very frequent use of mythology, and sometimes connects religion and fable too closely without distinction.

He descends to display his knowledge with pedantic ostentation; as when, in translating Virgil, he says, "tack to the larboard"—and "veer starboard"; and talks, in another work, of "virtue spooming before the wind." His vanity now and then betrays his ignorance:

They Nature's king through Nature's optics view'd,  
Revers'd, they view'd him lessen'd to their eyes.

He had heard of reversing a telescope, and unluckily reverses the object.

He is sometimes unexpectedly mean. When he describes the Supreme Being as moved by prayer to stop the Fire of London, what is his expression?

A hollow crystal pyramid he takes,  
In firmamental waters dipp'd above,  
Of this a broad *extinguisher* he makes,  
And hoods the flames that to their quarry strove.

When he describes the Last Day, and the decisive tribunal, he intermingles this image

When rattling bones together fly,  
From the four quarters of the sky

It was indeed never in his power to resist the temptation of a jest. In his *Elegy on Cromwell*.

No sooner was the Frenchman's cause embraced,  
 Than the *light Monsieur* the grave *Don* outweigh'd ;  
 His fortune turn'd the scale——

He had a vanity, unworthy of his abilities, to show, as may be suspected, the rank of the company with whom he lived, by the use of French words, which had then crept into conversation ; such as *fraicheur* for *coolness*, *fougue* for *turbulence*, and a few more, none of which the language has incorporated or retained. They continue only where they stood first, perpetual warnings to future innovators.

These are his faults of affectation ; his faults of negligence are beyond recital. Such is the unevenness of his compositions, that ten lines are seldom found together without something of which the reader is ashamed. Dryden was no rigid judge of his own pages ; he seldom struggled after supreme excellence, but snatched in haste what was within his reach ; and when he could content others, was himself contented. He did not keep present to his mind an idea of pure perfection ; nor compare his works, such as they were, with what they might be made. He knew to whom he should be opposed. He had more music than Waller, more vigour than Denham, and more nature than Cowley ; and from his contemporaries he was in no danger. Standing therefore in the highest place, he had no care to rise by contending with himself ; but, while there was no name above his own, was willing to enjoy fame on the easiest terms.

He was no lover of labour. What he thought sufficient, he did not stop to make better ; and allowed himself to leave many parts unfinished, in confidence that the good lines would overbalance the bad. What he had once written, he dismissed from his thoughts ; and, I believe, there is no example to be found of any correction or improvement made by him after publication. The hastiness of his productions might be the effect of necessity ; but his subsequent neglect could hardly have any other cause than impatience of study.



Relentless Time, destroying power,  
Which stone and brass obey,  
Who giv'st to ev'ry flying hour  
To work some new decay.

In the Alexandrine, when its power was once felt, some poems, as Drayton's *Polyolbion*, were wholly written; and sometimes the measures of twelve and fourteen syllables were interchanged with one another. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure among the heroic  
10 lines of ten syllables, and from him Dryden professes to have adopted it.

The Triplet and Alexandrine are not universally approved. Swift always censured them, and wrote some lines to ridicule them. In examining their propriety, it is to be considered that the essence of verse is regularity, and its ornament is variety. To write verse, is to dispose syllables and sounds harmonically by some known and settled rule; a rule however lax enough to substitute similitude for identity, to admit change without breach of order, and to relieve the  
20 ear without disappointing it. Thus a Latin hexameter is formed from dactyls and spondees differently combined; the English heroic admits of acute or grave syllables variously disposed. The Latin never deviates into seven feet, or exceeds the number of seventeen syllables; but the English Alexandrine breaks the lawful bounds, and surprises the reader with two syllables more than he expected.

The effect of the triplet is the same; the ear has been accustomed to expect a new rhyme in every couplet; but is on a sudden surprised with three rhymes together, to which  
30 the reader could not accommodate his voice, did he not obtain notice of the change from the braces of the margin. Surely there is something unskilful in the necessity of such mechanical direction.

Considering the metrical art simply as a science, and consequently excluding all casualty, we must allow that Triplets and Alexandrines, inserted by caprice, are interruptions of



By him we were taught *sapere et furi*, to think naturally and express forcibly. Though Davies has reasoned in rhyme before him, it may be perhaps maintained that he was the first who joined argument with poetry. He showed us the true bounds of a translator's liberty. What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden, *lateritium invenit, marmoream reliquit*. He found it brick and he left it marble.

- 10 Mr. Dryden, having received from Rymer his Remarks on the Tragedies of the last Age, wrote observations on the blank leaves: which, having been in the possession of Mr. Garrick, are by his favour communicated to the public, that no particle of Dryden may be lost.

"That we may the less wonder why pity and terror are not now the only springs on which our tragedies move, and that Shakspeare may be more excused, Rapin confesses that the French tragedies now all run on the *tendre*; and gives the reason, because love is the passion which most predominates  
20 in our souls, and that therefore the passions represented become insipid, unless they are conformable to the thoughts of the audience. But it is to be concluded, that this passion works not now amongst the French so strongly as the other two did amongst the ancients. Amongst us, who have a stronger genius for writing, the operations from the writing are much stronger; for the raising of Shakspeare's passions is more from the excellency of the words and thoughts, than the justness of the occasion; and, if he has been able to pick single occasions, he has never founded the whole reasonably;  
30 yet, by the genius of poetry in writing, he has succeeded.

"Rapin attributes more to the *dictio*, that is, to the words and discourse of a tragedy, than Aristotle has done, who places them in the last rank of beauties; perhaps, only last in order, because they are the last product of the design, of the disposition or connection of its parts; of the characters, of the manners of those characters, and of the thoughts pro-

ceeding from those manners. Rapin's words are remarkable: 'Tis not the admirable intrigue, the surprising events, and extraordinary incidents, that make the beauty of a tragedy, 'tis the discourses, when they are natural and passionate: so are Shakspeare's.

"The parts of a poem, tragic or heroic, are,

"1. The fable itself.

"2. The order or manner of its contrivance, in relation of the parts to the whole.

"3. The manners, or decency, of the characters, in 10 speaking or acting what is proper for them, and proper to be shown by the poet.

"4. The thoughts which express the manners.

"5. The words which express those thoughts.

"In the last of these Homer excels Virgil, Virgil all other ancient poets, and Shakspeare all modern poets.

"For the second of these, the order: the meaning is, that a fable ought to have a beginning, middle, and an end, all just and natural, so that that part, e.g. which is the middle, could not naturally be the beginning or end, and so of the 20 rest: all depend on one another, like the links of a curious chain. If terror and pity are only to be raised, certainly this author follows Aristotle's rules, and Sophocles' and Euripides' example. but joy may be raised too, and that doubly, either by seeing a wicked man punished, or a good man at last fortunate, or perhaps indignation, to see wickedness prosperous, and goodness depressed both these may be profitable to the end of tragedy, reformation of manners; but the last improperly, only as it begets pity in the audience; though Aristotle, I confess, places tragedies of 30 this kind in the second form.

"He who undertakes to answer this excellent critique of Mr. Rymer, in behalf of our English poets against the Greek, ought to do it in this manner. either by yielding to him the greatest part of what he contends for, which consists in this, that the *μῦθος*, i.e. the design and conduct of it, is more con-

ducing in the Greeks to those ends of tragedy, which Aristotle and he propose, namely, to cause terror and pity : yet the granting this does not set the Greeks above the English poets.

"But the answerer ought to prove two things : first, that the fable is not the greatest master-piece of a tragedy, though it be the foundation of it.

"Secondly, That other ends as suitable to the nature of tragedy may be found in the English, which were not in the  
10 Greek.

"Aristotle places the fable first; not *quoad dignitatem, sed quoad fundamentum*: for a fable never so movingly contrived to those ends of his, pity and terror, will operate nothing on our affections, except the characters, manners, thoughts, and words, are suitable.

"So that it remains for Mr. Rymer to prove, that in all those, or the greatest part of them, we are inferior to Sophocles and Euripides : and this he has offered at, in some measure ; but, I think, a little partially to the ancients.

20 "For the fable itself, 'tis in the English more adorned with episodes, and larger than in the Greek poets ; consequently more diverting. For, if the action be but one, and that plain, without any counterturn of design or episode, i.e. underplot, how can it be so pleasing as the English, which have both underplot and a turned design, which keeps the audience in expectation of the catastrophe ? whereas in the Greek poets we see through the whole design at first.

"For the characters, they are neither so many nor so various in Sophocles and Euripides, as in Shakspeare and  
30 Fletcher ; only they are more adapted to those ends of tragedy which Aristotle commends to us, pity and terror.

"The manners flow from the characters, and consequently must partake of their advantages and disadvantages.

"The thoughts and words, which are the fourth and fifth beauties of tragedy, are certainly more noble and more poetical in the English than in the Greek, which must be

proved by comparing them somewhat more equitably than Mr. Rymer has done.

"After all, we need not yield that the English way is less conducing to move pity and terror, because they often show virtue oppressed and vice punished; where they do not both or either, they are not to be defended.

"And if we should grant that the Greeks performed this better, perhaps it may admit of dispute, whether pity and terror are either the prime, or at least the only ends of tragedy.

"Tis not enough that Aristotle has said so; for, Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind. And chiefly we have to say (what I hinted on pity and terror, the last paragraph gave one), that the punishment of vice and reward of virtue are the most adequate ends of tragedy because most conducing to good example of life. Now, pity is not so easily raised for a criminal (and the ancient tragedy always represents its chief person such) as it is for an innocent man; and the suffering of innocence and punishment of the offender is of the nature of English tragedy; contrarily in the Greek, innocence is unhappy often, and the offender escapes. Then we are not touched with the sufferings of any sort of men so much as of lovers; and this was almost unknown to the ancients; so that they neither administered poetical justice, of which Mr. Rymer boasts, so well as we; neither knew they the best common place of pity, which is love.

"He therefore unjustly blames us for not building on what the ancients left us, for it seems, upon consideration of the premises, that we have wholly finished what they began.

"My judgment on this piece is this—that it is extremely learned; but that the author of it is better read in the Greek than in the English poets; that all writers ought to study this critique, as the best account I have ever seen of the ancients; that the model of tragedy, he has here given is excellent, and extremely correct; but that it is not the only model of all tragedy, because it is too much circum-

scribed in plot, characters, etc.; and, lastly, that we may be taught here justly to admire and imitate the ancients, without giving them the preference with this author, in prejudice to our own country.

"Want of method in this excellent treatise makes the thoughts of the author sometimes obscure.

"His meaning, that pity and terror are to be moved, is, that they are to be moved as the means conducing to the ends of tragedy, which are pleasure and instruction.

- 10 "And these two ends may be thus distinguished. The chief end of the poet is to please; for, his immediate reputation depends on it.

"The great end of the poem is to instruct, which is performed by making pleasure the vehicle of that instruction; for, poesy is an art, and all arts are made to profit. *Rapin.*

"The pity, which the poet is to labour for, is for the criminal, not for those or him whom he has murdered, or who have been the occasion of the tragedy. The terror is likewise in the punishment of the same criminal; who, if he 0 be represented too great an offender, will not be pitied; if altogether innocent, his punishment will be unjust.

"Another obscurity is, where he says Sophocles perfected tragedy by introducing the third actor; that is, he meant, three kinds of action; one company singing, or another playing on the music; a third dancing.

"To make a true judgment in this competition betwixt the Greek poets and the English in tragedy:

"Consider, first, how Aristotle has defined a tragedy. Secondly, what he assigns the end of it to be. Thirdly, what 10 he thinks the beauties of it. Fourthly, the means to attain the end proposed.

"Compare the Greek and English tragic poets justly, and without partiality, according to those rules.

"Then, secondly, consider whether Aristotle has made a just definition of tragedy; of its parts, of its ends, and of its beauties; and whether he, having not seen any others but

those of Sophocles, Euripides, etc., had or truly could determine what all the excellences of tragedy are, and where they consist.

"Next, show in what ancient tragedy was deficient: for example, in the narrowness of its plots, and fewness of persons; and try whether that be not a fault in the Greek poets; and whether their excellency was so great, when the variety was visibly so little; or whether what they did was not very easy to do.

"Then make a judgment on what the English have added to their beauties; as, for example, not only more plot, but also new passions: as, namely, that of love, scarce touched on by the ancients, except in this one example of Phædra, cited by Mr. Rymer, and in that how short they were of Fletcher.

"Prove also that love, being an heroic passion, is fit for tragedy, which cannot be denied, because of the example alleged of Phædra; and how far Shakspeare has outdone them in friendship, etc.

"To return to the beginning of this inquiry; consider pity and terror be enough for tragedy to move. and, believe, upon a true definition of tragedy, it will be found that its work extends farther, and that it is to reform manners, by a delightful representation of human life in great persons, by way of dialogue. If this be true, then not only pity and terror are to be moved, as the only means to bring us to virtue, but generally love to virtue, and hatred to vice, by showing the rewards of one, and punishments of the other, at least, by rendering virtue always amiable, though it be shown unfortunate, and vice detestable, though it be shown triumphant.

"If, then, the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice be the proper ends of poetry in tragedy, pity and terror, though good means, are not the only. For all the passions, in their turns, are to be set in a ferment as passions have from age to age, and the poet's business is to

raised, by making them appear such in their characters, their words, and actions, as will interest the audience in their fortunes.

"And if, after all, in a larger sense, pity comprehends this concernment for the good, and terror includes detestation for the bad, then let us consider whether the English have not answered this end of tragedy as well as the ancients, or perhaps better.

"And here Mr. Rymer's objections against these plays are 10 to be impartially weighed, that we may see whether they are of weight enough to turn the balance against our countrymen.

"Tis evident those plays, which he arraigns, have moved both those passions in a high degree upon the stage.

"To give the glory of this away from the poet, and to place it upon the actors, seems unjust.

"One reason is, because whatever actors they have found, the event has been the same; that is, the same passions have been always moved; which shows that there is something of force and merit in the plays themselves, conducing 20 to the design of raising these two passions; and suppose them ever to have been excellently acted, yet action only adds grace, vigour, and more life, upon the stage; but cannot give it wholly where it is not first. But, secondly, I dare appeal to those who have never seen them acted, if they have not found these two passions moved within them: and if the general voice will carry it, Mr. Rymer's prejudice will take off his single testimony.

"This, being matter of fact, is reasonably to be established by this appeal; as, if one man says 'tis night, the rest of 30 the world conclude it to be day, there needs no farther argument against him, that it is so.

"If he urge, that the general taste is depraved, his arguments to prove this can at best but evince that our poets took not the best way to raise those passions; but experience proves against him, that these means, which they have used, have been successful, and have produced them.

"And one reason of that success is, in my opinion, this, that Shakspeare and Fletcher have written to the genius of the age and nation in which they lived; for though nature, as he objects, is the same in all places, and reason too the same; yet the climate, the age, the disposition of the people, to whom a poet writes, may be so different, that what pleased the Greeks would not satisfy an English audience.

"And if they proceeded upon a foundation of truer reason to please the Athenians, than Shakspeare and Fletcher to please the English, it only shows that the Athenians were 10 a more judicious people; but the poet's business is certainly to please the audience.

"Whether our English audience have been pleased hitherto with acorns, as he calls it, or with bread, is the next question; that is, whether the means which Shakspeare and Fletcher have used, in their plays, to raise those passions before named, be better applied to the ends by the Greek poets than by them. And perhaps we shall not grant him this wholly; let it be granted that a writer is not to run down with the stream, or to please the people by their own usual methods, but rather to reform their judgments, it still remains to prove that our theatre needs this total reformation.

"The faults which he has found in their designs are rather wittily aggravated in many places than reasonably urged; and as much may be returned on the Greeks, by one who were as witty as himself.

"2. They destroy not, if they are granted, the foundation of the fabric; only take away from the beauty of the symmetry; for example, the faults in the character of the King and No-King, are not, as he makes them, such as render him detestable, but only imperfections which accompany human nature, and are for the most part excused by the violence of his love, so that they destroy not our pity or concernment for him. this answer may be applied to most of his objections of that kind.

"And Rollo committing many murders, when he is answerable but for one, is too severely arraigned by him; for, it adds to our horror and detestation of the criminal; and poetic justice is not neglected neither; for we stab him in our minds for every offence which he commits; and the point, which the poet is to gain on the audience, is not so much in the death of an offender as the raising an horror of his crimes.

"That the criminal should neither be wholly guilty, nor 10 wholly innocent, but so participating of both as to move both pity and terror, is certainly a good rule, but not perpetually to be observed; for, that were to make all tragedies too much alike; which objection he foresaw, but has not fully answered.

"To conclude, therefore; if the plays of the ancients are more correctly plotted, ours are more beautifully written. And, if we can raise passions as high on worse foundations, it shows our genius in tragedy is greater; for in all other parts of it the English have manifestly excelled them."

20 The original of the following letter is preserved in the library at Lambeth, and was kindly imparted to the public by the reverend Dr. Vyse.

*Copy of an original Letter from John Dryden, Esq., to his sons in Italy, from a MS. in the Lambeth Library, marked No. 933, p. 56.*

(Superscribed)

"Al illustrissimo Sig<sup>a</sup> CARLO DRYDEN Camariere  
d'Honore A.S.S.

"In Roma.

30 "Franca per Mantova.

"Sept. the 3rd, our style [1697].

"DEAR SONS,—Being now at Sir William Bowyer's in the country, I cannot write at large, because I find myself somewhat indisposed with a cold, and am thick of hearing, rather worse than I was in town. I am glad to find, by your letter

of July 26th, your style, that you are both in health; but wonder you should think me so negligent as to forget to give you an account of the ship in which your parcel is to come. I have written to you two or three letters concerning it, which I have sent by safe hands, as I told you, and doubt not but you have them before this can arrive to you. Being out of town, I have forgotten the ship's name, which your mother will inquire, and put it into her letter, which is joined with mine. But the master's name I remember: he is called Mr. Ralph Thorp, the ship is bound to Leghorn, 10 consigned to Mr. Peter and Mr. Tho. Ball, merchants. I am of your opinion, that by Tonson's means almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the Dedication, though he had prepared the book for it, for, in every figure of Eneas he has caused him to be drawn like King William, with a hooked nose. After my return to town, I intend to alter a play of Sir Robert Howard's, written long since, and lately put by him into my hands, 'tis called *The Conquest of China by the Tartars*. It will cost me six weeks study, with the 20 profitable benefit of an hundred pounds. In the meantime I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's Feast, who, you know, is the patroness of music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the Stewards of the Feast, who came in a body to me to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgman, whose parents are your mother's friends. I hope to send you thirty guineas between Michaelmas and Christmas, of which I will give you an account when I come to town. I remember the counsel you give me in your letter; but dissembling, though lawful in 30 some cases, is not my talent, yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just resentments against that degenerate order. In the meantime, I flatter not myself with any manner of hopes, but do my duty, and suffer for God's sake; being assured, beforehand, never to be rewarded, though the times should

alter. Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true, and all things hitherto have happened accordingly to the very time that I predicted them: I hope at the same time to recover more health, according to my age. Remember me to poor Harry, whose prayers I earnestly desire. My Virgil succeeds in the world beyond its desert or my expectation.

You know the profits might have been more; but neither  
10 my conscience nor my honour would suffer me to take them: but I never can repent of my constancy, since I am thoroughly persuaded of the justice of the cause for which I suffer. It has pleased God to raise up many friends to me amongst my enemies, though they who ought to have been my friends are negligent of me. I am called to dinner, and cannot go on with this letter, which I desire you to excuse; and am

“Your most affectionate father,

“JOHN DRYDEN.”

## NOTES.

tions, there is sufficient reason to suspect that he was not a lover," p. 68, l. 15; and "Of Triplets and Alexandrines, though he did not introduce the use, he established it," p. 97, l. 14. It is a mistake to supply, as Ryland does, "of facts" after "display." The phrase, "display of himself," occurs below at p. 61, l. 10.

l. 12. his last biographer, Derrick. *Derrick's Life of Dryden*

of Johnson's good sayings. "Johnson, for sport perhaps, or from the spirit of contradiction, eagerly maintained that Derrick had merit as a writer. Mr Morgan argued with him directly in vain. At length he had recourse to this device. 'Pray, sir,' said he, 'whether do you reckon Derrick or Smart the best

ness he abandoned for the stage, and the stage very soon for literature. He succeeded Beau Nash, as Master of the Ceremonies at Bath, where he was more in his element, but his loose and extravagant life kept him always in want" (Mr. Mowbray Morris' note at Boswell, p. 35).

modern Baptists are their representatives in English religious life to-day. The English Anabaptists of Dryden's time are not to be confounded with the fanatical sect in Germany to whom the name was first applied. The English Anabaptists were, Bishop Butler tells us, "generally men of virtue, and of a universal charity."

Page 2, l. 2. one of the King's scholars. One of those the cost of whose education was defrayed out of the revenues of the school. The Westminster scholarships at Cambridge, to one of which Dryden succeeded, were scholarships endowed in the same way out of the revenues of Trinity College, Cambridge, to which only Westminster boys could be appointed. Dr. Richard Busby (1606-1695), Headmaster of Westminster School, is one of the most famous of English schoolmasters. Dryden sent his two sons to be educated by him, and dedicated to him, late in life, his translation of the *Fifth Satire of Persius*. "There are extant two letters of Dryden to Busby about his sons when they were at Westminster, written in 1682, very graceful in their language of gratitude and deference to his old master" (Christie's Memoir, prefixed to the Globe Edition of *Dryden's Poetical Works*, p. xviii).

l. 6. Lord Hastings. Son of the Earl of Huntingdon, and a schoolfellow of Dryden's. He died of small-pox in 1649 at the age of nineteen. "Ambition" in this sentence is used almost in its etymological sense of "going about in search of." The phrase recurs at p. 67, l. 21. For what Johnson means by "conceits" in it compare his remarks on Cowley and the "Metaphysical Poets," as he proposed to call them. "They endeavoured to be singular in their thoughts. ... Their thoughts are often new, but seldom natural; they are not obvious, but neither are they just; and the reader, far from wondering that he missed them, wonders more frequently by what perseverance of industry they were ever found. ... The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtilty surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased." Dryden's treatment in this poem of the disease which had carried off his young friend is a good example of the vicious style referred to. The loathsome pustules of the small-pox are compared first to rose-buds:

"Blisters with pride swelled, which through his flesh did sprout  
Like rose-buds, stuck in the lily skin about,"

then to gems—

"Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,  
The cabinet of a richer soul within?"

then, in the lines which Johnson quotes, to stars.



intended to leave it undecided whether the professed change of opinion was real or not. With the apology which follows compare what Johnson says of the similar case of Waller, where he is much more outspoken. "The poem on the death of the Protector seems to have been dictated by real veneration for his memory. Dryden and Sprat wrote on the same occasion; but they were young men, struggling into notice, and hoping for some favour from the ruling party. Waller had little to expect: he had received nothing but his pardon from Cromwell, and was not likely to ask anything from those who should succeed him. Soon afterwards the Restoration supplied him with another subject; and he exerted his imagination, his elegance, and his melody, with equal alacrity, for Charles the Second. It is not possible to read without some contempt and indignation poems of the same author ascribing the highest degree of power and piety to Charles the First, then transferring the same power and piety to Oliver Cromwell, now inviting Oliver to take the crown, and then congratulating Charles the Second on his recovered right. Neither Cromwell nor Charles could value his testimony as the effect of conviction, or receive his praises as effusions of reverence; they could consider them but as the labour of invention, the tribute of dependence. Poets, indeed, profess fiction; but the legitimate end of fiction is the conveyance of truth; and he that has flattery ready for all whom the vicissitudes of the world happen to exalt, must be scorned as a prostituted mind, that may retain the glitter of wit, but has lost the dignity of virtue." Johnson goes on to tell the story of how Charles the Second twitted Waller with the inferiority of the verses written in his own praise as compared with those the poet had previously written in honour of Cromwell, to which Waller is said to have made the rejoinder that poets succeed better with fiction than with truth.

Sir Walter Scott's remarks on this subject are conspicuously fair to Dryden: "The *Elegy on Cromwell*, although doubtless sufficiently faulty, contained symptoms of a regenerating taste; and, politically considered, although a panegyric on an usurper, the topics of praise are selected with attention to truth, and are, generally speaking, such as Cromwell's worst enemies could not have denied to him. Neither had Dryden made the errors or misfortunes of the royal family and their followers the subject of censure or of contrast. With respect to them, it was hardly possible that a eulogy on such a theme could have less offence in it. This was perhaps a fortunate circumstance for Dryden at the Restoration; and it must be noticed to his honour, that as he spared the exiled monarch in his panegyric on the usurper, so, after the Restoration, in his numerous writings on the side of royalty, there is no instance of his recalling his former praise of Cromwell."

Page 3, l. 5. It was, however, not totally forgotten, etc. One of the victims of Dryden's satire hit upon the odd piece of vengeance, as Scott calls it, of reprinting the poem with the inscription, "An Elegy on the Usurper, by the author of *Abraham and Achitophel*, published to show the loyalty and integrity of the poet."

l. 8. The same year. A mistake. *Astron Redux* was published in 1660, the year of the Restoration, and the poem on the coronation, which is here referred to, in the following year.

l. 12. perhaps with more than was deserved. Critics are not yet at one over this line. The present editor thinks the objection taken to it pure pedantry. No one quarrels with the biblical "darkness that might be felt," or with Milton's "darkness visible." Is it any bolder to speak of the silence that can be "heard" before the burst of the thunder-storm? The stillness takes possession of the ear, and the mind takes the alarm. But Christie, for example, holds that it is not easy to justify the line. Johnson's instances, he says, are not in point. "Death is personified. Stillness may help study or benefit an invalid, as darkness may prevent work, or cold injure plants, but there is decided incongruity in stillness or the absence of all sound intruding or entering the ear."

l. 14. privation likewise certainly is darkness. Another case of inverted arrangement. Compare the note on p. 11, l. 11.

l. 23. important enough to be formally offered to a patron. In Dryden's time it was still customary for authors to endeavour to ensure a favourable reception for their writings at the hands of the public by choosing a patron, to whom each work was dedicated. The patron enjoyed the distinction of having been singled out for a compliment the worth of which depended on the merits or fame of the author; and the author in return got, sometimes a money present, but, at all events, such passport to a public hearing as the name of the patron could supply. The

man fully expected that it would be so dedicated. He was conscious, however, of having in the interval neglected Johnson, if indeed he had not on one occasion treated him with great rudeness. By way of conciliating the author of a work which he saw was likely to prove a great success, Lord Chesterfield wrote a commendatory notice of the *Dictionary* in one of the current journals, and caused it to be intimated to Dr. Johnson

who the writer was. Upon which Dr. Johnson addressed a letter to Lord Chesterfield, which was given to the world for the first time in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. In it he spoke of the neglect with which Lord Chesterfield had treated him after one interview that would appear to have been of a somewhat cordial nature. He went on: "Seven years, my Lord, have passed since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. . . . Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it."

As an illustration of the money relations which often subsisted between author and patron, with no thought of discredit to either party, it may be worth adding that Johnson, in taking steps to secure the ultimate publication of this letter, asked that it might be noted, with reference to the phrase "without one act of assistance," that he had at one time received from Lord Chesterfield the sum of £10, "but as that was so inconsiderable a sum, he thought the mention of it could not properly find a place in a letter of the kind that this was."

l. 28. is not certainly known. It has been ascertained since Johnson wrote. His conjecture that the year was 1663 was right; and the play itself contains, in the prologue, an intimation of the day and the hour of its first performance. "*First Astrologer reads.* A figure of the heavenly bodies in their several apartments, Feb. 5th, half an hour after three afternoon, from which you are to judge the success of a new play, called *The Wild Gallant.*" Samuel Pepys, whose famous *Diary* contains many references to Dryden, saw the play acted on the 23rd February, and has the following note about it: "The play so poor a thing as I never saw in my life almost, and so little answering the name that, from the beginning to the end, I could not, nor can at this time, tell certainly which was the *Wild Gallant*. The King did not seem pleased at all, all the whole play, nor anybody else." The play with alterations was reproduced in 1667, and published for the first time in 1669.

l. 33. collected, inferred, a meaning which the word has now almost lost, though the Anglo-Saxon equivalent, 'gathered,' is still used in that metaphorical sense.

## NOTES.

. 5, 1. 10]

L. 34. commenced a writer for the stage, commenced to write plays. This use of the word 'commence' is obsolete. It was a University phrase. The student who took his degree was said to commence a Master of Arts. Compare the word 'commencement' as used at Cambridge for the day on which degrees are conferred.

Page 4, l. 3 he kept possession for many years. To keep possession of the stage is to have such a reputation as a playwright that managers will gladly accept your plays, while the public may be counted on as eager to come and give them a trial. He who has possession of the stage is, as Johnson puts it below, at least "secure of a hearing."

L. 20 [Intrinsic, belonging to the nature of the drama itself. c. d. r.]

[concomitant, an external circumstance in some way connected with its publication or performance c. d. r.]

L. 24 [Earl of Orrery had considerable influence. He had worked for the Restoration of Charles II, who made him Lord-Justice of Ireland c. d. r.]

L. 25 he made his essay of dramatic rhyme, used for the first time rhyme in a play

L. 38 in the Rehearsal See below, p. 27 In the passage referred to, Bayes, who represents Dryden in that burlesque way, "I'm sure the design a good, that cannot be denied. As then, for language, 'egad, I defy 'em all, in nature, to mend it. Besides, sir, I have printed above a hundred sheets of paper to insinuate the plot into the boxes."

Page 5, l. 3 the description of Night

"All things are hushed, as nature's self lay dead;  
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head;  
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,  
And sleeping flowers in with the night dew sweet,  
Even lust and envy sleep, yet have dreams  
Beat to my soul, and slumber to my eyes."

Wordsworth thought these lines "vague, bombastic, and senseless." But Wordsworth's judgment, whether of his own poems or of those of others, was not always to be depended on. The last couplet here has certainly all the strength and swing of Dryden's manner. Thomas Rymer (1639-1713) was a critic of some note in his day.

L. 10. who perhaps knew that by his dexterity of versification, etc. Compare what Dryden himself says about Milton's reason for writing in blank verse. "Neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse, though I may excuse him, by the example Hannibal Caro, and other Italians, who have used it. For y

ever causes he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme (which I have not now the leisure to examine), his own particular reason is plainly this, that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it; which is manifest in his *Juvenilia*, or verses written in his youth; where his rhyme is always constrained and forced, and comes hardly from him at an age when the soul is most pliant; and the passion of love makes almost every man a rhymers, though not a poet" (Dedication to the Translation of Juvenal).

l. 19. The *Annus Mirabilis* was formally dedicated to "the Metropolis of Great Britain, the most renowned and late flourishing City of London, in its representatives the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, the Sheriffs and Common Council of it."

l. 25. [common, commonplace, and of little value. c. d. p.]

l. 35. the *Gondibert* of Davenant. Sir William Davenant was Ben Jonson's successor and Dryden's predecessor in the poet-laureateship. His *Gondibert* was published in 1651.

Page 6, l. 1. Of this stanza he mentions the encumbrances. "I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble and of greater dignity both for the sound and number than any other verse in use amongst us; in which I am sure I have your approbation.... In the necessity of our rhymes I have always found the couplet verse most easy (though not so proper for this occasion), for there the work is sooner at an end, every two lines concluding the labour of the poet; but in quatrains he is to carry it farther on, and not only so, but to bear along in his head the troublesome sense of four lines together. For those who write correctly in this kind must acknowledge that the last line of the stanza is to be considered in the composition of the first. Neither can we give ourselves the liberty of making any part of a verse for the sake of rhyme, or concluding with a word which is not current English, or using the variety of female rhymes; all which our fathers practised." Compare the quotation from Scott given in the note on p. 72, l. 14.

l. 19. Here appears a great inconsistency. Johnson has forgotten that in the first paragraph of the *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy* it is distinctly intimated by Dryden himself that the *Defence* was written to be prefaced to a second edition of the *Indian Emperor*. There is thus no inconsistency at all; and Langbaine's statement, to which Johnson refers as helping to clear the matter up, is taken from the *Defence* itself.

l. 23. In 1663 he succeeded Sir William Davenant as poet-laureat. Davenant died in April, 1663, but Dryden was not appointed to succeed him until August, 1670.



but, as everybody says, corrected by Dryden. It is the most entire piece of mirth, a complete farce from one end to the other, that certainly was ever writ. I never laughed so in my life. I laughed till my head ached all the evening and night with the laughing; and at very good wit therein, not fooling. The house full, and in all things of mighty content to me" (Pepys, under dates the 15th and 16th of August, 1667). "The play was called the Duke of Newcastle's, and it was published in the following year without author's name; but, later, Dryden announced it without dispute as one of his own plays" (Christie). Scott's version of the matter is that the Duke of Newcastle translated Molière's *L'Étourdi*, and presented his translation to Dryden, who adapted it in this play for the stage. The Voiture to whom Langbaine traced one of the songs introduced into the play by Dryden was a French poet of some distinction at the time.

1. 16. [plagiarism, unacknowledged theft of the literary work of others. C. D. P.]

1. 19. *The Tempest*. "Up, and at the office hard all the morning, and at noon resolved with Sir W. Pen to go see *The Tempest*, an old play of Shakspeare's, acted, I hear, the first day; and so my wife, and girl, and W. Hewer by themselves, and Sir W. Pen and I afterwards by ourselves; and forced to sit in the side balcone over against the musique-room at the Duke's house, close by my Lady Dorset and a great many great ones. The house mighty full; the King and Court there: and the most innocent play that ever I saw; and a curious piece of musique in an echo of half sentences, the echo repeating the former half, while the man goes on to the latter; which is mighty pretty. The play has no great wit, but yet good, above ordinary plays" (Pepys, under date the 7th of November, 1667). Mr. Saintsbury, Dryden's latest editor, has some doubt as to whether what Pepys saw was the original or adapted play, but the reference to the song shows that it was the adaptation. The song will be found at Act III., Scene iv. There is nothing to correspond with it in the original play. Davenant and Dryden's travesty of this great play is most honourably remembered now on account of the magnificent tribute to Shakespeare's genius in the Prologue.

"But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be,  
Within that circle none durst walk but he."

"Much cannot be said for Davenant's ingenuity, in contrasting the character of a woman, who had never seen a man, with that of a man, who had never seen a woman, or in inventing a sister monster for Caliban. The majestic simplicity of Shakespeare's plan is injured by thus doubling his characters; and his wild landscape is converted into a formal parterre, 'where each alley has its brother.'... We are delighted with the feminine sim-



Page 8, l. 4. sculptures, what we now call engravings. Dryden's *Translation of Juvenal* (1697) is, in the words of the title page, "adorned with sculptures."

l. 6. [the last blast of inflammation, the last circumstance which inflamed Dryden's anger. C. D. P.]

l. 13. deplored, deplorable.

conversation, knowledge of how to behave himself. "Conversation," in the sense of behaviour, is familiar now chiefly in Biblical language. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (1 Peter ii. 11). But compare also the form used in admitting candidates to degrees: "By the authority given me as Chancellor of this University I admit you to the degree of Master of Arts; and I charge you that ever in your life and conversation you show yourself worthy of the same."

l. 17. lewd, licentious, irregular, not conforming to the rules of poetry. The word is now generally confined to moral lewdness. [The original meaning was "ignorant," and the term was applied to the laity as distinguished from the clergy, who were the only educated classes. C. D. P.]

l. 19. pudder, an older form of pother.

l. 28. have all a certain natural cast of the father, are all a little like Settle himself.

Page 10, l. 2. Dutch grout, what in Scotland is called porridge.

l. 3. [to stay, to satisfy for the moment; literally, to support the stomach while waiting for other food. C. D. P.]

l. 5. To dish up the poet's broth, to serve up to the reader the more plentiful mess promised in the last sentence.

l. 31. [physical, medicinal. C. D. P.]

l. 33. [choleric humours. Choler was one of the four humours (fluids) supposed to exist in the body. The preponderance of choler, or choleric humour, made a man hot-tempered (Lat. *cholera*, bile). C. D. P.]

were it written in characters, etc. A doctor's bill is what we now call a prescription. The quantities of the drugs prescribed and the like were, as they still are, written in characters which are otherwise almost entirely obsolete.

Page 11, l. 14. [Jacks with lanthorns, Jack-o'-lantern, the *ignis fatuus* or false fire sometimes seen over marshy ground, also called will-o'-the-wisp. C. D. P.]

l. 28. Never was place so full of game, etc. The three verbs in the next sentence are all taken from the hunter's



l. 10. the *Mock Astrologer*. This play was produced on the 12th of June, 1668. "It was not very successful. Pepys did not like it, nor did his wife: the Secretary to the Admiralty [Pepys] thought it 'very smutty, and nothing so good as *The Maiden Queen* or *The Indian Emperor* of Dryden's making.' Herringman the publisher told Pepys that Dryden himself called it 'but a fifth-rate play.' The play was dedicated in the usual strain of adulation to the Duke of Newcastle. On the 19th of June, 1668, the same day on which Pepys mentions that his wife went to the theatre and 'saw the new play, *Evening Love*, of Dryden's, which, though the world commends, she likes not,' Evelyn enters the following in his Diary: 'To a new play with several of my relatives, *The Evening Love*, a foolish plot and very profane; it afflicted me to see how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times.'"

l. 19. *Shakspeare's plots, etc.* "Most of Shakspeare's plays, I mean the stories of them, are to be found in the *Hecatomithi* or *Hundred Novels* of Cinthio. I have myself read in his Italian, that of *Romco and Juliet*, the *Moor of Venice*, and many others of them" (Preface to the *Mock Astrologer*). Cinthio's book was published in 1565. "Shakspeare seems to have been indebted to Cinthio for hints only in the case of *Othello*, and perhaps *Measure for Measure*" (Ryland).

l. 24. which is only to say, etc. Dryden has answered this objection by anticipation. "But now it will be objected, that I patronise vice by the authority of former poets, and extenuate my own faults by recrimination. I answer, that as I defend myself by their example, so that example I defend by reason, and by the end of all dramatic poesy." Dryden is not defending himself against a charge of immoral writing in general, but against the specific objection that in his comedies the wicked go unpunished, or are even rewarded.

l. 26. Against those that accused him of plagiarism, etc. "I am taxed with stealing all my plays, and that by some who should be the last men from whom I would steal any part of them. There is one answer which I will not make; but it has been made for me, by him to whose grace and patronage I owe all things,

'Et spes et ratio studiorum in Caesare tantum'—

and without whose command they should no longer be troubled with anything of mine; that he only desired that they, who accused me of theft, would always steal him plays like mine."

l. 31. *Tyrannic Love, etc.* This play was produced in 1669. Johnson does not give the title correctly, one of several proofs that he was not fond of getting up from his desk to check his memory. The right title is *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*.



passages, which are, I hope, not many, is that I knew they were bad enough to please, even when I writ them; but I repent of them amongst my sins; and, if any of their fellows intrude by chance into my present writings, I draw a stroke over all those Delilahs of the theatre; and am resolved I will settle myself no reputation by the applause of fools" (Dedication to the *Spanish Friar*).

Page 14, l. 2. *Want of time, etc.* Dryden has anticipated this reflection of Johnson's, though not, of course, with the particular reference. He says in the preface to his *Fables*: "I will not trouble my reader with the shortness of time in which I writ it, or the several intervals of sickness; they who think too well of their own performances are apt to boast in their prefaces how little time their works have cost them, and what other business of more importance interfered; but the reader will be as apt to ask the question, why they allowed not a longer time to make their works more perfect, and why they had so despicable an opinion of their judges as to thrust their indigested stuff upon them, as if they deserved no better."

l. 14. *his malice to the parsons.* Compare at p. 51, l. 11. "Dryden indeed discovered, in many of his writings, and affected an absurd malignity to priests and priesthood."

l. 16. *the Conquest of Granada.* *Almanzor and Almahide, or the Conquest of Granada by the Spaniards*, a tragedy in two parts, was produced in 1670, and published in 1672.

l. 32. *epilogue, a speech in verse uttered by one of the principal actors at the end of the performance of a drama.* Similarly, a prologue preceded the performance. These speeches were usually in the form of direct addresses by the writer of the play to his patrons in the theatre. c. d. r.]

l. 33. *discrediting his predecessors.* The theme of the epilogue is that the poet, to be successful, must conform to the age, and that the comparative success of the poets of Dryden's day, as compared with older poets, was only the reflex of the improvement on the times.

"They, who have best succeeded on the stage,  
Have still conformed their genius to the age.  
Thus Jonson did mechanic humour show,  
When men were dull, and conversation low ...  
Think it not envy that these truths are told;  
Our poet's not malicious though he's bold.  
'Tis not to brand them, that their faults are shown,  
But, by their errors, to excuse his own.  
If love and honour now are higher raised,  
'Tis not the poet, but the age is praised."



sion 'floating palace,' for a magnificent ship, has almost passed into common speech.

"*Montezuma*. What forms did these new wonders represent?

"*Guyomar*. More strange than what your wonder can invent.  
The object, I could first distinctly view,  
Was tall straight trees, which on the waters flew;  
Wings on their sides, instead of leaves did grow,  
Which gathered all the breath the winds could blow;  
And at their roots grew floating palaces,  
Whose outblown bellies cut the yielding seas."

Page 18, l. 4. if he had designed, etc., if his object really was to belittle my play, thought by him to be senseless, he should have tried to find instances of pedantry like those three found by me in his own.

l. 13. [fustian. See p. 12, l. 17. c. d. p.]

[canting, hypocritical. *Cant* was at first mock humility. Here the words are described as fustian or bombastic because they include ideas taken from logic, and yet hypocritical because of an apparent pretence of ignorance and humility. c. d. p.]

l. 24. *Poor Robin*, the name assumed by the author of *Poor Robin's Almanack*, an annual which was published first about 1661. "On the title-page we read, 'Written by Poor Robin, Knight of the Burnt Island, a well-wisher to Mathematicks'" (Ryland). This explains the following '*Philomathematics*' (well-wishers to mathematics).

Page 19, l. 4. [huff, mere bluster and empty boasting. c. d. p.]

l. 25. [foreright, in a direct line. The prefix *fore* (for) is intensive. We now sometimes use "right" in a similar way. c. d. p.]

l. 28. [lights of, alights on; if he finds in another writer's works any idea like the one in his mind, he is almost certain to borrow the words which express the idea. c. d. p.]

l. 32. [the fate of Simoels, to be dried up by fire. The line is taken from the verses describing the great fire of 1666. Homer describes the Scamander, into which the Simocis flowed, as being burnt up by Vulcan during the siege of Troy. c. d. p.]

Page 20, l. 21. *Enough of Settle*. "More than enough of Settle," the reader will be apt to rejoin. The passage is difficult to print correctly on account of the way in which Johnson mixes up Dryden, Settle, and himself in it. For example on page 16, lines 16 to 20 are from Settle's pamphlet, the extract beginning with a quotation made by Settle from Dryden. The seven lines which follow are Johnson's own, and include



at a purpose of the time. Dryden wanted to make the War, on which Charles the Second was entering, some- less unpopular than it was, and, with that intention, tried to inflame popular hate against the Dutch by a dramatic representation of a massacre which had taken place in the East fifty years before. Scott calls *Ambowna* the worst production Dryden ever wrote. It was produced in 1673.

7. as he declares in his epilogue.

"A poet once the Spartans led to fight,  
And made them conquer in the muse's right;  
So would our poet lead you on this day,  
Showing your tortured fathers in this play."

"The style and tone of the Prologue and Epilogue are execrable. It is not to be forgotten that the now fierce abettor of this Dutch war, begun and carried on by the so called Cabal Ministry, was a few years later as fierce a reviler of Shaftesbury for his share in promoting this very war. Both in *Absalom and Achitophel* and in *The Medal* is this war in alliance with France against Holland made a chief indictment against Shaftesbury by Dryden, who now, while the war was in progress, gloated over the French alliance against Holland, and prayed for the degradation and ruin of the Dutch republic. These are the concluding lines of the Epilogue, chiming with Shaftesbury's *Delenda est Carthago* of the same year:

"Yet is their empire no true growth but humour,  
And only two kings' touch can cure the tumour,  
As Cato did his Afric fruits display;  
So we before your eyes their Indies lay;  
All loyal English will like him conclude,  
Let Caesar live, and Carthage be subdued."

(Christie.)

*Ambowna* is one of the Molucca islands. The massacre of the English merchants of the factory there took place in 1622. Shaftesbury used Cato's phrase to the Romans, *Delenda est Carthago*—"Carthage must be destroyed" in recommending the Dutch War to his countrymen. When later he had to fly to Holland as a political refugee, he asked the citizens of Amsterdam to enrol him among their number, in order that he might be safe from Charles II. The story goes that they sent him his ticket of citizenship with the mocking inscription, *Ab nostra Carthagine nonlum deleta salutem accipe*—"Take safety from our Carthage not yet destroyed."

L. S. [Tyrtaeus (about B.C. 700-660). His poems exercised an important influence upon the Spartans in the second Messenian war, by assuaging dissensions at home and animating their courage in the field. c. n. r.]

wished that it should be acted. After the Revolution, it was the first play ordered to be represented by Queen Mary in her

think of; while those who were in the pit before her, turned their heads over their shoulders, and all in general directed their looks towards her whenever their fancy led them to make any application of what was said."

plot

f our poet's  
particularly  
re and comic  
does he  
but in th  
perpetual

reminded of the dependence of the one part of the play on the other. These are so frequent, and appear so very natural, that the comic plot, instead of diverting our attention from the tragic business, recalls it to our mind by constant and unaffected allusion."

l. 22. [risible, comical, that which excited laughter (Lat. *risus*, laughter). C. D. P.]

l. 31. the Duke of Guise. "This play, a joint composition of Dryden and Lee, was first represented December 4, 1682. It was the first new play brought out by the united company. The apparent application of the play to the political circumstances of England at that time, and more especially points of resemblance in the history of the Duke of Guise to that of Monmouth, led the Lord Chamberlain (the Earl of Arlington) to withhold his license for some months. The King's partiality for Monmouth and fear of what might be the effect on the public of a play which might be understood as predicting for Monmouth an assassination like that of Guise were the causes of the Court's unwillingness to allow the play to be acted. The Court's scruples, however, gave way. The play was received with discordant feelings by the Whig and Tory portions of the audience; and at first the disapprobation decidedly predominated" (Christie).

l. 32. *Œdipus*. Produced in the latter part of 1678. See Christie, p. 438.

l. 33. the remnant of the Covenanters. The Solemn League and Covenant was a document pledging all who signed it to establish and maintain the Presbyterian form of church government. It was put forward by the General Assembly of the Scotch Church in August, 1613, and was subscribed by the English Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines in September of the same year. But the Covenant and its principles never made any real headway in England.

Page 22, l. 11. [the Leaguers of France, a Catholic organisation under the Guises, with the King of France at its head (1576). C. D. P.]

l. 14. *Albion and Albanus*. "The opera of *Albion and Albanus* was written before the death of Charles II., and privately represented several times in his presence; but it was not brought before the public till after Charles' death. It was first acted publicly, June 3, 1685. It is a political piece, and was intended to celebrate the victory of Charles II. over the Whigs. 'Albion' is Charles, and 'Albanus' his brother James. The opera was brought out after James' accession to the throne with great splendour, and at very great expense. On the sixth night of the representation, June 13, news came to London of the landing of Monmouth, which

topped the career of the play, and caused great loss to the theatre" (Christie, p. 465).

L 17. The State of Innocence and Fall of Man. This is the story of Milton's *Paradise Lost* told in rhyme. Dryden called the piece an opera, but it was never acted or intended to be acted. It was published in 1674. The most interesting thing about it now is the story of how Milton gave Dryden permission to make the proposed use of his poem. "It is reported by Mr.

numbers of Dryden  
nce, 'Ay, you r  
Johnson's criticism

as "an attempt to  
addressed. Compare

L 36. Heroic verse, heroic or epic poetry

Page 23, L 5 overpassed, we now say 'passed over'

L 14. seek an apology in falsehood. Johnson lets his indignation at the preface carry him too far here. Dryden's statement is by no means so incredible as to warrant Johnson in dismissing it in this unhesitating way as pure fiction.

L 16. Aurung Zebe. "*Aurung Zebe* was produced at the Theatre Royal in 1675. It is the last of Dryden's rhyming tragedies; and in the Prologue he says that he grows weary of rhyme, which he had before so zealously defended. He also, in the Prologue speaks of retiring from the stage, and nearly two years elapsed before he produced his next play. *Aurung Zebe* was published in 1676" (Christie, p. 427)

L 17 [a great prince then reigning Aurung Zebe (d. 1707) had a long and glorious reign, and was the most successful of a line of Indian Emperors known as Great Moguls. Delhi was his capital. C. D. F.]

L 29. The complaint of life is celebrated. "The passage descriptive of life has been distinguished by all critics, down to Dr. Johnson

Aur When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;

Strange cozenage ! none would live past years again,  
 Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain ;  
 And from the dregs of life think to receive  
 What the first sprightly running could not give.  
 I'm tired of waiting for this chymic gold,  
 Which fools us young and beggars us when old.

Nor is the answer of Nourmahal inferior in beauty :

*Nour.* 'Tis not for nothing that we life pursue ;  
 It pays our hopes with something still that's new :  
 Each day's a mistress, unenjoyed before ;  
 Like travellers, we're pleased with seeing more.  
 Did you but know what joys your way attend,  
 You would not hurry to your journey's end.

It might be difficult to point out a passage in English poetry in which so common and melancholy a truth is expressed in such beautiful verse, varied with such just illustration" (Scott). The first passage had a fascination for Johnson. "He used frequently to observe that there was more to be endured than enjoyed in the general condition of human life, and frequently quoted those lines of Dryden, 'Strange cozenage,' etc. For his part, he said, he never passed that week in his life which he would wish to repeat, were an angel to make the proposal to him" (Boswell, Globe edition, p. 217).

l. 31. the Earl of Mulgrave. "John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards created Marquis of Normanby, and at length Duke of Buckingham, made a great figure during the reigns of Charles II., of his unfortunate successor, of William III., and of Queen Anne. His bravery as a soldier, and abilities as a statesman, seem to have been unquestioned, but for his poetical reputation he was probably much indebted to the assistance of those wits whom he relieved and patronized. As, however, it has been allowed a sufficient proof of wisdom in a monarch that he could choose able ministers, so it is no slight commendation to the taste of this rhyming peer that in youth he selected Dryden to supply his own poetical deficiencies, and in age became the friend and eulogist of Pope.... After the grave of Dryden had remained twenty years without a memorial, this nobleman had the honour to raise the present monument at his own expense, being the latest, and certainly one of the most honourable, acts of his life.... It may be worthy the attention of the great to consider the value of that genius which can hand them down to posterity in an interesting and amiable point of view, in spite of their own imbecilities, errors, and vices. While the personal character of Mulgrave has nothing to recommend it, and his poetical effusions are sunk into oblivion, we still venerate the friend of Pope and the protector of Dryden" (Scott). Sheffield

## NOTES.

p. 24, l 21]

was Duke of Buckinghamshire, though Pope also shortens the title to 'Buckingham':

"Muse, 'tis enough; at length thy labour ends,  
And thou shalt live, for Buckingham commends."

l. 34 his intention to write an epic poem. "Some little hopes I have yet remaining, and those too, considering my abilities, may be vain, that I may make the world some part of amends, for many ill plays, by an heroic poem. Your lordship has been long acquainted with my design; the subject of which you know is great, the story English, and neither too far distant from the present age, nor too near approaching it. Such it is in my opinion, that I could not have wished a nobler occasion to do honour to my king, my country, and my friends; most of our ancient nobility being concerned in the action" (Scott). The subject referred to was the conquest of Spain by Edward the Black Prince. See Christie's *Memoir*, p. xxxviii. Notice again that Johnson is content to quote from memory. Compare the note at p. 13, l 31.

l. 36. purloined, as, he says, happened to him. See p. 50, l 5 g

Page 24, l 5 All for Love "All for Love, or the World well Lost—universally considered the best of Dryden's plays—was produced at the King's Theatre in the beginning of 1678. The concluding couplet of the Prologue shows that it came out in winter. In the Prologue to *Aureng Zebe*, in 1675, Dryden had confessed his intention of renouncing rhymed tragedies, and in this he abandons rhyme.

"He fights this day unarmed, without his rhyme" (Christie)

Compare the following from Dryden's Preface to this play, and notice the grace of the reference to Shakespeare. "In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare, which that I might perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. I hope I may affirm, and without vanity, that, by imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play, and particularly, that I prefer the scene betwixt Antony, and Ventidius in the first act, to any which I have written in this kind."

l. 21 Limberham. The play takes ham, the chief character, "a tam what is last said to him, and that is meant a man who keeps a most the dissolute manners of those matrimonial infidelity was night venial of trespasses, but as a were unable to brook any ridicule."

formed between the keeper and his mistress" (Scott). The play was produced in 1678, and had to be withdrawn after the third acting.

l. 28. *Œdipus*. See reference given at p. 21, l. 32. Johnson would appear to have forgotten that he had already mentioned *Œdipus*.

l. 29. [Sophocles (born B.C. 495), a celebrated Greek tragic poet, wrote two tragedies on *Oedipus*. C. D. P.]

[Seneca (died A.D. 65), a celebrated Roman philosopher; his language is clear, forcible, and full of thought. C. D. P.]

l. 30. [Corneille (1606-1684), the first French writer of heroic plays, which are considered the progenitors of those of Dryden. C. D. P.]

l. 32. *Don Sebastian*. "Dryden had not produced a play for four years, when his tragedy of *Don Sebastian* was brought out in 1690: and it was his first appearance on the stage after the Revolution, which had deprived him of Court favour, and of his offices of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal. He refers in the opening of the *Prologue* to his altered position, and endeavours to propitiate the audience by an appeal to their magnanimity. The play was not very successful in representation, but it is one of the best of Dryden's plays. It was published also in 1690, with a dedication to the Earl of Leicester, the elder brother of Algernon Sydney, who himself as Lord Lisle had in early life acted with Cromwell, and was now, without being prominent in politics, a supporter of William and Mary's throne" (Christie, p. 467). Scott justly complains of Johnson's "meagre commendation" of the play. "Shakespeare laid aside, it will be perhaps difficult to point out a play containing more animatory incident, impassioned language, and beautiful description, than *Don Sebastian*. Of the former, the scene betwixt Dorax and the king, had it been the only one ever Dryden wrote, would have been sufficient to ensure his immortality" (Scott).

Page 25, l. 3. the distresses of princes, and the vicissitudes of empires. The play deals with the adventures supposed to have befallen Sebastian, King of Portugal, after the fatal battle of Alcazar. Sebastian fell in that fight, but, as his body was not recovered, there were as many legends about his subsequent adventures in captivity, and as much hope of his ultimate return to Portugal, as in the similar case of James the Fourth of Scotland after Flodden.

l. 12. *Amphitryon*. "Dryden had now set to work again diligently for the stage; and *Don Sebastian* was quickly followed by the comedy of *Amphitryon*, or the *Two Sosias*, which was very successful" (Christie, p. 470). *Amphitryon* was produced in the same year as the last-mentioned play. The plot of the play

{Plautus, the most celebrated comic poet of Rome, born about A.C. 254. C. D. P.}

l. 13. {Molière (d. 1673) was one of the chiefs of French literature. He wrote numerous comedies. C. D. P.}

dedicated the play when it was published), to withdraw her objection " (Christie, p. 476) Johnson does not even care to damn *Cleomenes* with faint praise, but it is, as Mr. Saintsbury says, in parts extremely fine and noble. The following song from it is quoted here as one example of the many exquisite lyrics of Dryden which unfortunately lie for the most part hidden now in his plays.

"Love has in store for me one happy minute,

l. 17. {the Guardian, Steele's paper, which followed the *Spectator* (1713). C. D. P.}

l. 20. left alone with a young beauty *Cleomenes* is tempted by *Cassandra*, the mistress of *Ptolemy*, King of Egypt. *r* rejects her advances.

l. 24. *King Arthur*. "*King Arthur, or the British Worthy*, called by Dryden 'a dramatic opera,' was produced at the Theatre Royal in 1691. The music was by Purcell, and the opera was a great success. Dryden had meditated an epic poem on King Arthur, but the necessity, as he himself said, of working for subsistence, and probably even more his nature, which made him work impulsively and under excitement, prevented the fulfilment of that design. This opera had been originally composed, like *Albion and Albanus*, at the end of Charles II.'s reign: it was much changed before it was produced in the reign of William and Mary" (Christie, p. 473).

l. 26. It does not seem to have been ever brought upon the stage. This is incorrect and inconsistent also with Johnson himself four lines below. Moreover it was not during a performance of this opera that the news of Monmouth's landing reached the capital. That true story applies to an opera previously mentioned, *Albion and Albanus*. See note on p. 22, l. 14. It looks as if two additional remarks on the operas, jotted down by Johnson after the completion of his first draft, had by accident got inserted in the wrong places. It was *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man* that was never acted; and it was a performance of *Albion and Albanus* which was interrupted in the way described. The error was not noticed, and "*Arthur*" was accordingly written at p. 25, l. 32. Scott notes that *King Arthur* was still occasionally performed in his time, "being the only one of Dryden's numerous plays which has retained possession of the stage."

l. 28. [Marquis of Halifax, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and leader of the Whigs. He had opposed the Duke of York in the reign of Charles II. c. D. P.]

l. 31. [Monmouth had landed. This was in June, 1685, therefore six years before the publication of this opera. c. D. P.]

l. 33. *Love Triumphant*. "*Love Triumphant*, a tragi-comedy, Dryden's last play, was brought out in the beginning of 1694. It was a great failure. A letter, preserved by Malone, written by one who was evidently a bitter enemy of Dryden's—"huffing Dryden" he calls him—says that the play 'was damned by the universal cry of the town.' Dryden returned on this occasion to rhyme, which he had long discarded for tragedy, in some of the tragic parts. In the Prologue Dryden formally announces his intention of giving up writing for the stage: and the Epilogue opens with the conceit that 'the poet's dead'" (Christie, p. 479).

Page 26, l. 4. he began and ended his dramatic labours with ill success. Scott quotes this, and finely adds, "a fact which may secure the inexperienced author from despondence, and teach him who has gained reputation how little he ought to presume on its stability." Scott joins in the general condem-

usual, all the usual  
and the "Song upon Jealousy," -- The "Song to a  
of a Girl, have superior merit." The "Song to a  
follows:

"Young I am, and yet unskilled  
How to make a lover yield.  
How to keep, or how to gain,  
When to love, and when to feign.

"Take me, take me, some of you,  
While I yet am young and true;  
Ere I can my soul disguise,  
Heave my breasts, and roll my eyes.

"Stay not till I learn the way  
How to lie and to betray.  
He that has me first is blest,  
For I may deceive the rest

"Could I find a blooming youth,  
Full of love, and full of truth,  
Brisk, and of a jaunty mien,  
I should long to be fifteen"

l 17 the poet had, for a long time, but a single night. The word "night" in this and the next sentence is an anachronism. In Dryden's time plays were performed in the afternoon, and not at night. The meaning here is that the "takings" of one performance were the poet's perquisite. The performance selected was the third, which gave time for the poet to share the full in the good or ill success of the play. The state of the house on the third day was therefore a matter of some interest to the author. Compare the lines in Pope's *Dunciad*, l 113

"Now (shame to Fortune!) an ill run at play  
Blank'd his bold visage, and a thin third day  
Swearing and supperless the hero sate,  
Blasphem'd his gods, the dice, and damn'd his fate."

A good attendance on the important day is spoken of in the poem (l 57) as "a warm third day"

• L 19. [Southern (1660-1746) produced his last tragedies *Fatal Marriage* and *Oroonoko* in the reign of William III. c  
[Rowe (1673-1718) wrote several tragedies, but is best known as the first editor of Shakespeare (1709). He was poet-laureate from 1713 till his death. c n r]

l. 20. arts of improving a poet's profit, which Dryden forbore to practise. This is obscure. Ryland quotes Milnes, "Johnson alludes, perhaps, to Southerne, who used to solicit people to buy tickets for the performance of the plays, and use every means for the increase of his profits. Dryden was annoyed to hear him own that he had made £700 by one play." But Johnson's language seems to point to something more discreditable than merely soliciting people to take tickets. Perhaps something like blackmail is meant.

l. 23. the accumulated gain of the third night, the dedication, and the copy. The "copy" is the manuscript of the play, from which it was first produced on the stage, and afterwards published. Compare below, l. 30, where "copies" is used in the sense of printed copies of the play.

[the dedication. This was expected to produce a donation from the one to whom the play was dedicated. The amount depended on the degree of flattery employed. See p. 40, ll. 15-20. c. d. p.]

l. 30. To increase the value of his copies, etc. Compare Swift's lines:

"Read all the Prefaces of Dryden  
For these our critics much confide in;  
Though merely writ at first for filling,  
To raise the volume's price a shilling."  
*On Poetry, a Rhapsody.*

l. 35. [By studying the prefaces the public would learn lessons in the art of criticising and judging poetry, and therefore would become more difficult to please. c. d. p.]

Page 27, l. 4. His prologues had such reputation, etc. Scott points out that prologues (and epilogues) to plays had, in Dryden's time, a degree of consequence attached to them which they did not possess before, and which has not since been given to them. "They were not only used to propitiate the audience; to apologise for the players or poet; or to satirise the follies of the day, which is now their chief purpose; but they became, during the collision of contending factions, vehicles of political tenets and political sarcasm, which could at no time be insinuated with more success than when clothed in nervous verse and delivered with all the advantages of elocution to an audience, whose numbers rendered the impression of poetry and eloquence more contagious."

"It is not surprising," Scott goes on, "that Dryden soon obtained a complete and absolute superiority in this style of composition over all who pretended to compete with him. While the harmony of his verse gave that advantage to the speaker

epilogues. The players also had recourse to him upon any remarkable occasion; as when a new house was opened; when the theatre was honoured by a visit from the King or Duke; when they played at Oxford during the public Acts; or, in short, in all cases when an occasional prologue was thought necessary to grace the performance."

l. 23 characterised him, almost equivalent to "caricatured him," but with the suggestion that there was a good deal of truth in the representation.

l. 30 [Butler (1612-1680) His *Hudibras* was a severe satire against the Puritans. C. D. P.]

l. 32 then his chaplain, private chaplain to the Duke of Buckingham.

l. 33 the length of time, etc. As Johnson says below, "Bayes, in the *Rehearsal*, was originally meant for Sir William Davenant, who, however, died three years before it was put upon the stage."

l. 35. [artifice of action, adaptation of the performance so as to suit it to ridicule of a later poet For example, in 1717, it was reproduced with the alterations necessary to ridicule Pope. C. D. P.]

l. 25. The design was probably to ridicule the reigning poet, whoever he might be. "Unquestionably, and this continued a stage custom with the *Rehearsal* long after Dryden's death, and was even made the means of annoying Pope. 'To the character of Bayes,' says Cibber in his letter to Pope, 'there had always been allowed such indelicate liberties of observation upon anything new or remarkable in the state of the stage as Mr. Bayes might think proper to make.' Cibber, therefore, in acting Bayes (and it was one of his favourite characters), 'had a fling' at the *Three Hours of Marriage*. This fling, as Cibber himself relates, gave him his first place in the deathless satire of Pope, who had at least one finger in the unfortunate *Three Hours of Marriage*" (Cunningham).

l. 28. Bayes probably imitated the dress, etc. "The poet Bayes of the farce was Dryden; his dress and manners were imitated, his favourite phrases freely used, and a number of passages of his plays parodied; Buckingham is said to have taken great pains with the actor Lacey to teach him how to recite various passages" (Christie, *Memoir*, p. xxxiii).

l. 30. the cant words, words used without any particular meaning, interjectional phrases, and the like. One meaning of "cant" in the dictionaries is, "the special phraseology or speech peculiar to any profession, trade, or class." Johnson here speaks of the cant words in the sense of words continually in the mouth of an individual.

l. 32. is blooded and purged.

"Bayes. Pray, sir, how do you do when you write?

"Smith. Faith, sir, for the most part, I am in pretty good health.

"Bayes. Ay, but I mean what do you do when you write?

"Smith. I take pen, ink, and paper, and sit down.

"Bayes. Now, I write standing, that's one thing; and then another thing is, with what do you prepare yourself?

"Smith. Prepare myself! what the devil does the fool mean?

"Bayes. Why, I'll tell you now what I do. If I am to write familiar things, as sonnets to Armida and the like, I make use of stew'd prunes only; but when I have a grand design in hand, I ever take physick, and let blood; for, when you would have pure swiftness of thought and fiery flights of fancy, you must have a care of the pensive part. In fine, you must purge the stomach.

"Smith. By my troth, sir, this is a most admirable receipt for writing.

"Bayes. Ay, 'tis my secret; and, in good earnest, I think one of the best I have.

"*Smith*. In good faith, sir, and that may very well be" (*The Rehearsal*, ii. 1).

"How has my passion made me Cupid's scoff!  
This hasty boot is on, the other off.  
And sullen lies, with amorous design,  
To quit loud fame and make that beauty mine. . . .  
Shall I to honour or to love give way?  
Go on, cries honour, tender love says, nay;  
Honour aloud commands, plucks both boots on;  
But softer love doth whisper, put on none." . . .

In the end he "goes out hopping, with one boot on, and t'other off"

Page 29, l. 2 [lost Dublin, in 1647 Ormond was in command of the Royalists, and, having to choose between surrendering Dublin to the Irish or the Parliament, chose the latter course. C. D. P.]

l. 4 The Earl of Rochester, etc Johnson repeats here a good deal that has been already said at p. 7, l. 34 fg

l. 23. [by opposing a shield of adamant confidence, by shielding himself with a confidence in himself which no attack could shake "To oppose a shield" is here "to place the shield between himself and his opponents" C. D. P.]

l. 27 injuriously, unjustly

l. 23 [he would, etc., if he denied a part, and not the whole, of the accusation it would be assumed that he was unable to deny the rest, and the partial denial would be equivalent to a confession. C. D. P.]

l. 31. [perplexity which generality produces, the confusion raised in the mind of a reader by an indefinite accusation C. D. P.]

l. 33 [unless provoked by vindication, unless his attempt to justify himself should cause readers to look closer into the facts C. D. P.]

reward and a pardon were offered to the offender himself if he would make known the instigator. Neither offender nor instigator was discovered. It seems to have been always believed that Rochester was the instigator of the assault, and the *Essay on Satire* the cause of anger" (Christie's *Memoir*, p. xlii).

l. 12. the true writer, that is, of the above-mentioned *Essay on Satire*.

l. 21. [versions, translations into English. c. d. p.]

l. 24. such a charge, that he professed to be translating from the Latin original when in reality he was only making an English version of a French translation.

l. 26. [wanted the literature, lacked the education. c. d. p.]

l. 28. Hidden in a crowd. The *Tacitus* was, like the *Lucian* and the *Plutarch*, the work of "different hands." Dryden was only one of several authors.

l. 32. among which one was the work of Dryden. Dryden translated two of the *Epistles* himself, and a third in conjunction with Mulgrave.

l. 35. who on such occasions was regularly summoned. Compare what has been already said of the way in which Dryden was employed to write prologues to plays, p. 27, l. 4 fg.

Page 31, l. 1. the liberty that it now enjoys. "There is undoubtedly a mean to be observed. Dryden saw very early that closeness best preserved an author's sense, and that freedom best exhibited his spirit; he therefore will deserve the highest praise who can give a representation at once faithful and pleasing, who can convey the same thoughts with the same graces, and who, when he translates, changes nothing but the language" (Johnson in the *Idler*, No. 69, quoted here by Cunningham). Compare, too, what Dryden says, in the preface to the translation of *Juvenal* of which he was a part author, of the work of *Holiday*, a previous translator. "And if we are not altogether so faithful to our Author, as our predecessors *Holiday* and *Stapylton*, yet we may challenge to ourselves this praise, that we shall be far more pleasing to our readers. We have followed our authors at greater distance, though not step by step, as they have done. For oftentimes they have gone so close, that they have trod on the heels of *Juvenal* and *Persius*, and hurt them by their too near approach. A noble author would not be pursued too close by a translator. We lose his spirit, when we think to take his body. The grosser part remains with us, but the soul is flown away, in some noble expression, or some delicate turn of words, or thought. Thus *Holiday*, who made this way his choice, seized the meaning of *Juvenal*; but the poetry has always escaped him."



November, 1681. A second edition was called for before the end of the year, and there were no less than seven editions of the poem issued in Dryden's lifetime.

l. 20. Sacheverell's trial. Dr. Sacheverell was in 1709 impeached before the House of Lords for a sermon preached at St. Paul's, in which he had maintained that the King could do no wrong, and that resistance to him was a crime against God. This doctrine was in effect a condemnation of the Revolution of 1688, and the Whig ministry unwisely resolved to put Sacheverell on his trial for it. "An outburst of popular enthusiasm in Sacheverell's favour showed what a storm of hatred had gathered against the Whigs and the war. The most eminent of the Tory Churchmen stood by his side at the bar, crowds escorted him to the court and back again, while the streets rang with cries of 'The Church and Dr. Sacheverell.' A small majority of the peers found the preacher guilty, but the light sentence they inflicted was in effect an acquittal, and bonfires and illuminations over the whole country welcomed it as a Tory triumph" (Green).

l. 21. Addison has attempted to derive. "In No. 512 of the *Spectator*" (Ryland).

l. 31. his person, attacks similar to that which Dryden himself made, for example, on the person of Lord Shaftesbury in the line quoted above:

"Fretted the pigmy body to decay."

l. 33. drew blood, made Dryden very angry.

l. 35. Ascribed ... to Somers. "The author has never been discovered" (Malone, p. 165). That Somers was not the author may be fairly assumed from the fact of his contributing a translation of one of Ovid's *Epistles* (Dido to Aeneas) to the translation of 1650 known as Dryden's *Ovid* (Cunningham).

[Somers, a Whig leader, became Lord Chancellor in 1696. c. D. P.]

Page 32, l. 8. [to him, i.e. Elkanah Settle. c. D. P.]

l. 10. This is a difficulty which I cannot remove. It is known now that the first of these two attempts at replying to Dryden was by one Samuel Pordage, and the second by Settle.

l. 13. Lord Shaftesbury's escape from a prosecution, etc. See note on p. 31, l. 12. "The rejection by the London grand jury, on November 24, 1681, of the bill of high treason presented against Lord Shaftesbury, was celebrated by a medal, having on one side a portrait of Shaftesbury, and on the other a sketch of London from the other bank of the river, showing the Bridge

l. 20 he left the palm doubtful, and divided the suffrages of the nation. Compare the note at p. 7, l. 34.

"Settle was the city poet. He had been a Tory; he went over to the Whigs, and wrote *The Character of a Popish Successor* on their side of the question, and in 1683 he again joined the Tory party. He had made himself notorious by directing pope-burnings in the city, to which Dryden alludes in what he says of fireworks and a puppet-show. But some years after, Settle, being very poor, became assistant to the keeper of a puppet-show of Bartholomew Fair, and even performed as a dragon. These lines in Young's *Epistle to Pope* refer to him."

Settle died, a pensioner of the Charter-house, in 1724

them."

l. 26. [epithalamium, a marriage song. C D F]

Page 33, l. 3. Judge Jefferies, "A man to all succeeding ages curst" for the cruelties practised by him upon the adherents of Monmouth in the West of England, after the failure of Monmouth's insurrection.

l. 4. [zealot for prerogative, advocate of the divine right of kings, as claimed by James II. and his predecessors. Jefferies carried out his Assizes after Monmouth's rebellion by order of the king and contrary to all principles of law and justice. C. D. P.]

l. 14. Dryden declared himself a convert to popery. The question of Dryden's sincerity in the change is a vexed one. Johnson, by the clause immediately preceding this one, makes it pretty clear what his opinion was, though he expressly declines to pass a categorical condemnation on Dryden. Macaulay does not shrink from doing that, and there is more passion than argument in what Christie calls the "disrespectful comment," which later biographers of Dryden have made on the passage in which Macaulay sums up the case, and gives judgment against the poet. It is not easy to understand how Ryland, for example, can say that "there is no adequate reason to doubt Dryden's sincerity." "Dryden," says Macaulay, "was poor and impatient of poverty. He knew little and cared little about religion. If any sentiment was deeply fixed in him, that sentiment was an aversion to priests of all persuasions, Levites, augurs, muftis, Roman Catholic divines, Presbyterian divines, divines of the Church of England. He was not naturally a man of high spirit, and his pursuits had been by no means such as are likely to give elevation or delicacy to his mind. He had during many years earned his daily bread by pandering to the vicious taste of the pit, and by grossly flattering rich and noble patrons. Self-respect and a fine sense of the becoming were not to be expected from one who had led a life of mendicancy and adulation. Finding that if he continued to call himself a Protestant his services would be overlooked, he declared himself a Papist."

l. 19. to retire for quiet to an infallible church, to seek peace for mind and soul by submission to a church accepted by him as an infallible guide in faith and morals. Sir Kenelm Digby was a well-known literary man of the generation previous to Dryden. The two Rainolds are the heroes of the odd story to which Johnson refers. They belonged to the differing faiths, and engaged in hot controversy with such success that each converted the other. Chillingworth is the well-known divine.

l. 33. [information may come, etc., the knowledge necessary to produce a change of opinion may be obtained at the time which may be most advantageous. C. D. P.]

l. 34. [fatal, unchangeable, fixed by fate. C. D. P.]



l. 4. and several other things. Burnet probably means Dryden's licentious style of writing and his change of religion.

l. 8. his Answer. "If Johnson had printed a preceding paragraph in Burnet, he and his readers would have seen that his Answer meant Varillas, not Dryden, as here given" (Cunningham).

l. 10. the conversation that he had set on between the Hinds and Panthers. See below, p. 36, l. 10 fg.

l. 17. grace. In the theological sense of the goodness that is a free gift (*gratia*) from God, and finds favour with God. It is the same as "morals" in l. 21 below.

l. 22. wreaked his malice on me. In *The Hind and the Panther*.

l. 34. his last employment. His poem of *The Hind and the Panther*.

Page 36, l. 6. the Hind and Panther. "Dryden's greatest effort in the cause of his new religion was in poetry. *The Hind and the Panther*, the most brilliant perhaps of all Dryden's poems, and showing the greatest variety of power, in which the milk-white Hind, representing the Church of Rome, argues the cause of that Church with the spotted Panther, representing the Church of England, occupied Dryden during the greater part of the year 1686, and was published in April, 1687. It is easy to ridicule the plan of this poem: the congruity of a theological dialogue between two quadrupeds will not bear serious discussion. But all the more admirable is the triumph of Dryden's art. Power of argument and beauty of language and verse are equally conspicuous in this fascinating poem" (Christie, *Memoir*, p. lx). For a criticism by Johnson of the poem, see below, p. 83, l. 10 fg.

l. 11. it was accordingly ridiculed, etc. "The appearance of *The Hind and the Panther* was a signal for a new volley of attack on Dryden, and his recent conversion naturally increased the ire of his opponents, and gave them much assistance for assault. Of many replies which came forth one only has acquired fame. Two young men, destined to become afterwards distinguished in literature and politics, Charles Montagu, the future Earl of Halifax, and Matthew Prior, combined to make a burlesque on Dryden's poem, under the title of *The Hind and the Panther transposed to the Story of the Country Mouse and the City Mouse*. *The Hind and the Panther* lent itself easily to parody. Bayes, Smith, and Johnson, of the *Rehearsal*, reappeared in this truly witty performance of Dryden's two young friends, for the two young men were frequenters of Will's, where Dryden, sitting in his great chair, now almost a throne, had been kind to them: and it is said that Dryden felt much hurt by their ridicule, and spoke, with tears in his eyes, of their ingratitude" (Christie, *Memoir*, p. lxi). The story referred to is one of several about

Dryden that have come down to us in Spence's *Anecdotes*. Spence got it from Dr. Lockier, Dean of Peterborough. "The Dryden

advantages of his lot.

l. 17. the facetious Thomas Brown. This writer is only known for the attacks on Dryden cited here

l. 24. Bayes. The name by which Dryden was ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*. See p. 23

l. 23 [deficient in literature, lacking in learning. See p. 30, l. 26. C. D. F.]

Page 37, l. 3 as many cow-hides, etc. In Homer Ajax carries a shield made of sevenfold hides

l. 16 [can quote, etc., can give his 'prentice a long lecture on thrift. C. D. F.]

l. 22. with a very indifferent religion. An allusion to the belief that Dryden was an Anabaptist to begin with. See p. 1, l. 14.

l. 24. which appeared first in a Tyrant's quarrel. *The Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell*. See p. 2, l. 30.

l. 27. the birth of the Prince. See the note on p. 34, l. 25.

l. 31 [a poem, *Britannia Rediviva*, i. e. Britain brought to life again. C. D. F.]

The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,  
 But Shadwell never deviates into sense.  
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,  
 Strike through and make a lucid interval;  
 But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,  
 His rising fogs prevail upon the day."

l. 10. It is related by Prior, etc. Christie points out that "there is obviously error and exaggeration in this statement: 'Dryden himself acknowledges the bountiful present' which Dorset made him at this time, but in terms which make it impossible to believe that Dorset made up to him for the whole loss he suffered in losing his appointment" (*Memoir*, p. lxiii).

l. 16. a public infliction, the loss of an income given and withdrawn on public grounds.

l. 18. His patron might, etc. Dryden's silence on the point is no proof that Dorset did not do as Prior said he did, as Dorset may have enjoined it on him to say nothing about it.

l. 31. Don Sebastian. See note on p. 24, l. 32.

l. 32. four dramas more, *Amphitryon* (note on p. 25, l. 12); *King Arthur* (note on p. 25, l. 24); *Cleomenes* (note on p. 25, l. 16); and *Love Triumphant* (note on p. 25, l. 33).

Page 39, l. 4. [the design. See p. 23, l. 24. c. d. p.]

l. 18. as Boileau observes. Boileau was a contemporary French poet and critic. Dryden quotes his remark that the plot of Tasso's poem, for example, "is a very unequal match for the poor devils, who are sure to come by the worst of it in the combat; for nothing is more easy than for an Almighty Power to bring his old rebels to reason when he pleases."

l. 22. [Rinaldo, a hero in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*. c. d. p.]

l. 32. [our numbers, English poetry. It would probably have added some new and useful feature to English verse. c. d. p.]

l. 35. [manners, morals (Lat. *mores*). c. d. p.]

Page 40, l. 4. he charged Blackmore with stealing. In the preface to his *Fables*. "But I will deal more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead, and therefore peace to the manes of his Arthurs. I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an epic poem on King Arthur in my preface to the translation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage, and therefore he rejected them, as Darys did the whirlbats of Eryx when they were thrown before him by Entellus. Yet from that preface he plainly took his hint, for he began immediately upon the story, though he had the

baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor but, instead of it, to traduce me in a libel."

l. 8. he borrowed two months. This is Dryden's own phrase on the subject. "The translation of Virgil, as a whole, was commenced in the end of 1693, and was finished about the end of 1696. It was published in July 1697... During three years

...lation;  
...a trans-  
...orrowed

Painting, the work, he said, of 'twelve mornings' (*Christie, Memoir*).

l. 16. that no opportunity of profit might be lost. See note on p. 26, l. 23.

l. 13. economy, judicious distribution.

l. 26. a contract now in the hands of Mr. Tension. It is given below, p. 53.

l. 30. the well-known ode on St. Cecilia's day. St. Cecilia's day is the 22nd of November. She is the patron saint of musicians, and it was for many years usual to celebrate her day by a concert at which an ode written for the occasion was sung. Dryden wrote two such odes. It is the later and more celebrated of the two that is here referred to. It was written for the festival of 1697. Dryden called it *Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music*. For a notice of Dryden's first ode for St. Cecilia's day see p. 60.

Page 41. l. 3. into what hands Homer was to fall. The reference is to Pope's translation of Homer.

... refused also. Death was then inevitable. The illness was short. A London newspaper announced on the 30th of April, 'John Dryden, Esq., the famous poet, lies a-dying'. At three in the following morning, May 1, he expired" (*Christie, Memoir*).

l. 9. There is extant a wild story, etc. It has long been recognized that there is not a word of truth in the romance which follows. Compare Christie's account of the funeral. "The poet who died thus poor had a splendid funeral. There appears

# JOHNSON'S LIFE OF DRYDEN. [p. 41, L. 5]

been in the first instance an intention of a quiet private ment; the state of the body rendered quick measures necessary; and it is said that Charles Montagu promptly offered by the expenses of the burial. But it appeared to others, among whom Lord Jeffries, the son of the chancellor of bad fame, prominent, and of whom Dryden's life-long friend, Dorset, was also one, that the poet merited burial in Westminster Abbey at a public funeral; and by their desire the body was embalmed, and an application was made through Garth, a poet and physician, to the President and Censors of the College of Physicians for permission to deposit the body in the College until the funeral. To the body lay in state for several days in the College of Physicians. The funeral took place on May 13; it was preceded by a ceremony at the College, in the course of which Garth delivered a funeral oration in Latin, and the Ode of Horace beginning 'Exegi monumentum aere perennius' was sung to music. Then there was a long procession from the College to Westminster Abbey, Dryden's friends who attended filling nearly fifty carriages, and the whole number of carriages that followed being about a hundred; music preceded the hearse, drawn by six horses. Dryden was buried in Poet's Corner, by the graves of Chaucer and Cowley." Scott notices the story which Johnson has given of the real ceremony from the pen of the spiteful dramatist Farquhar, and adds: "It must be a well-conducted and uncommon public ceremony, where the philosopher can find nothing to condemn, nor the satirist to ridicule; yet, to our imagination, what can be more striking than the procession of talent and rank which escorted the remains of Dryden to the tomb of Chaucer."

L. 16. [Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister of Sir R. Howard mentioned on p. 23. C. D. P.]

Page 43. l. 23. in a letter of Farquhar. "Farquhar, the dramatic author, who attended the funeral, wrote an ill-natured account of it, which is in print: 'I come now from Mr. Dryden's funeral, where we had an Ode of Horace sung instead of David's Psalms; whence you may find that we don't think a poet worth Christian burial. The pomp of the ceremony was a kind of rhapsody, and fitter, I think, for Hudibras than him; because the cavalcade was mostly burlesque; but he was an extraordinary man, and buried after an extraordinary fashion, for I do believe there was never such another burial seen. The oration, indeed, was great and ingenious, worth the subject, and like the author, whose pre-criptions can restore the living, and his pen embalm the dead. And so much for Mr. Dryden: whose burial was the same as his life, variety and not of a piece; the quality and mob, farce and heroics; the sublime and ridiculous mixed in a piece; great

## NOTES

p. 44, l. 29)

Cleopatra in a hackney-coach.' This is evidently a letter written for effect, and an ill-natured criticism. It is difficult to eliminate the vulgar and the ludicrous from the solemnity of any funeral: and the more splendour is attempted, the more difficult is perfect congruity" (Note in Christie's *Memoir*). Christie does not admit the legend into the text of his *Life*, and it is to be wished that Johnson had excluded it from his, as indeed he once intended to do (see l. 25). Johnson inserted the story partly for the sake of the pleasure writing the paragraph that follows gave him.

l. 29. [tumultuary, disturbed by tumult. C. D. F.]

l. 33. [event, result, consequence. C. D. F.]

l. 35. [United, a variation of joined. C. D. F.]

Page 44, l. 6. He was buried among the poets in Westminster Abbey. A part of the Abbey has been for ages set aside as a burying place for great poets. In our day Browning and Tennyson have each found a grave in "Poets' Corner," as the place is called.

l. 14. with circumstances, etc. "The marriage probably took place under circumstances not happy and airy, *no*. There are many broad manifestations in the printed productions of Dryden's many assailants against the purity of his wife's character before her marriage: and one distinctly taints him with having been lectured into marriage by the lady's brothers in order to save her character. A letter, which time has revealed, written by Dryden's wife before her marriage to a licentious young nobleman, the second Earl of Chesterfield, places it beyond reasonable doubt that she had an intrigue with him before her marriage. It is hardly likely that, if her character had been marred, she would have married Dryden, who, though of good family, was poor, and living by his pen. There is no doubt that they were an ill-assorted pair, and that the marriage was unhappy" (Christie). For "the satire imputed to Lord Somers," see p. 31, l. 34.

l. 20. He is said to have died at Rome. "John, the second son, died at Rome, very soon after his father's death, in January, 1701" (Christie, *Memoir*, p. lxxvii).

l. 21. Henry entered into some religious order. "Erasmus Henry, the youngest, called 'Harry' in his father's letters, succeeded in May, 1710, to the baronetcy on the death of his cousin, Sir John Dryden, and died on December 4 of the same year" (Christie).

l. 25. the translations of Juvenal. See p. 29, l. 1.

l. 29. the portrait of his mind, which has been left by Congreve. Congreve edited for the publisher Tonson an edition of Dryden's dramatic works in six volumes in 1733. The quotation which follows is from the preface, which took the form of a dedication to the Duke of Newcastle. Johnson has altered some

parts of the passage and omitted others. There was great friendship between the old poet and the young one. Congreve, as he himself says in this Dedication, was very conversant, and as intimately acquainted, with Mr. Dryden as the great disproportion in their years could allow them to be. When Congreve's *Double-Dealer* appeared, Dryden hailed it publicly with generous warmth as better than anything he himself had written :

"Well then the promised hour is come at last,  
The present age of wit obscures the past"—

and in the closing lines of the *Epistle to my dear friend, Mr. Congreve, on his comedy called the Double-Dealer*, of which these are the opening lines, commended to his young friend the care of his own reputation, in verses which cannot be read yet without emotion—

"Already I am worn with cares and age,  
And just abandoning the ungrateful stage :  
Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expence,  
I live a rent-charge on His providence :  
But you, whom every Muse and Grace adorn,  
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,  
Be kind to my remains ; and oh, defend,  
Against your judgment, your departed friend !  
Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,  
But shade those laurels which descend to you :  
And take for tribute what these lines express ;  
You merit more, nor could my love do less."

l. 36. [He was ... access, it was very easy for others to approach him, and his reception of them was pleasing. c. d. p.]

Page 45, l. 11. [pedantic, introduced for the mere purpose of showing his learning. c. d. p.]

l. 20. [the fondness of friendship, the kindly forbearance produced by Congreve's friendship for Dryden. c. d. p.]

Page 46, l. 13. [insidiousness, underhanded meanness. c. d. p.]

l. 11. [Creech (1659-1701) had obtained a fellowship at Oxford for his translation of *Lucretius*, but his translation of Horace's *Odes* did not sustain his credit. c. d. p.]

l. 23. [saturnine, silent and grave. Astrologers attribute this character to the influence of the planet Saturn at birth. c. d. p.]

Page 47, l. 15. It is related, etc. Carte wrote a *Life of the Duke of Ormond*. The Duke was a great soldier and statesman kept in high employments under Charles I., Charles II., and James II. He died before the Revolution.

l. 21. Horace will support him in the opinion, etc.

"Principibus placuisse viris non ultima laus est."

Horace's *Epistles*, i. 17.

Page 48, l. 1. Of the mind that can trade in corruption, etc. With Johnson's dignified rebuke of the moral filth in which Dryden's pen was unhappily from time to time dipped compare Scott's lines in the Introduction to the first canto of *Asarmon*.

" ]

Demanded for their niggard lay;  
Fit for their souls, a looser lay;  
The world defrauded of the high design,  
Profaned the God given strength, and marr'd  
the lofty line "

l. 2. [ideal wickedness, the imaginary acts of wickedness described in Dryden's dramas ( D R ]

l. 6 What consolation can be had, etc. In 1698, two years before Dryden's death, appeared the famous work of Jeremy Collier, a non juring clergyman, on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage. Dryden was singled out for special condemnation. Two passages in which Dryden says all that he felt could be said for himself are in Johnson's mind here. In a poetical epistle to his friend, Mr Motteux, on that writer's tragedy called *Beauty in Distress*, Dryden in two lines admits that Collier's attack was not undeserved.

" What I have loosely or profanely writ  
Let them to fires, their due desert, commit "

{ " " 70 76

" Johnson is referring  
which follows

too great a pleasure in seeing . . . at Collier took  
and goes on, " A divine might was employed his  
the nastiness of Plautus and  
no 26

pleasure . . .  
or on Horace, Juvenal, or Martian, . . .  
which, without their interpretation, had been unknown to  
modern times. Neither has he judged impartially betwixt the  
former age and us. There is more bawdry in one play of  
Fletcher's, called *The Custom of the Country*, than in all ours  
together. Yet this has been often acted on the stage in my  
remembrance "

l. 11 the meanness and servility of hyperbolical adulation,  
etc. In the remarks which follow Johnson allows his own

feelings of sturdy independence of all patrons (compare the note on p. 3, l. 23), to make him unfair to Dryden. In his dedications the poet merely wrote after the manner of his age. He no more meant his flattery to be taken in earnest than the favoured recipients of it supposed he did. Scott has well compared this eulogistic style of writing to the practice which makes the modern writer of official letters declare at the foot of each that he is the "humble, obedient servant" of the person he is addressing. Scott quotes Johnson here, and, after observing that perhaps no writer has equalled Dryden in the profusion and elegance of his adulation, goes on, "It may be noticed in palliation of Johnson's heavy charge, that the form of address to superiors must be judged of by the manners of the times; and that the adulation contained in dedications was then as much a matter of course as the words of submissive style, which still precede the subscription of an ordinary letter. It is probable that Dryden considered his panegyric as merely conforming with the fashion of the day, and rendering unto Caesar the things which were Caesar's, attended with no more degradation than the payment of any other tribute to the forms of politeness and usage of the world." Dryden enjoyed writing these dedications, and they are still readable, which is proof enough that there is more in them than the vulgar desire to please a nobleman, which was all that Johnson could see in them. The Afra Behn, to whom Johnson assigns a bad pre-eminence in flattery, was a woman writer of the time, who is remembered now chiefly for the gross immorality of the greater part of her writings.

l. 27. [encomiastic, full of praise and commendation. c. d. p.]

Page 49, l. 7. [formed for duration, destined to endure after the writer's death. c. d. p.]

l. 11. [this principle, the principle just laid down by Johnson. Dryden did not often name his enemy, but complained in a general manner. c. d. p.]

l. 14. [adverse name, the name of an adversary. c. d. p.]

l. 17. his libel remains injurious only to himself, his attack on Settle only shows how seriously Settle had contrived to annoy him.

l. 20. [to obviate, to turn aside. c. d. p.]

l. 26. [the claps of a playhouse. See p. 13, l. 9. c. d. p.]

l. 29. [glosses, comments on Dryden's writings. c. d. p.]

l. 30. [he confesses, "I shall say the less of Mr. Collier because in many things he has taxed me justly." This preface appeared in 1700, two years after Collier's criticism. See note on p. 48, l. 6. c. d. p.]

Page 50, l. 1. a reflection on Collier of great asperity. In the beginning of the tale of *Cymon and Iphigenia*.

"Old as  
The p  
Whic  
If lov  
Has fi  
Pollutes the p  
Acts what I write, and propagates in glau,  
With riotous excess, a priestly race."

To Dryden, as a Roman Catholic, a married priest was an abomination

l 3. Blackmore he represents, etc. "As for the City Bard or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is that I was the author of *Abraham and Achitophel*, which he thinks is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London. But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead, and therefore peace be to the manes of his Arthurs" The "Arthurs" are Blackmore's two epic poems, *Prince Arthur* and *King Arthur*, which were already dead in Dryden's times, and have never been revived since. The rest of the attack on Blackmore has been given already in the note to p 40, l 4

l 13. [masters of assay, those who test the weight of coins before they are issued] All the terms of this sentence apply first to coinage and then by metaphor to wit. c d f ]

l 20 [allay, an old spelling of alloy c d f ]

Page 51, l 11 [discovered, displayed c d f ]

l 12 malignity to priests and priesthood. Compare above, p. 14, l 14, "Thus foolishly could Dryden write, rather than not show his malice to the parsons"

l 17 Trapp See p. 68, l 28

[the author, i.e. Virgil, the author who suffered by this error in Dryden's translation c d f ]

l 18 as if any reproach, etc See note on p 68, l 28 [As if any reflection upon the actions of pagan priests could be considered as also a reflection on Christian priests. Trapp was  
"for the office of priest irrespective of the  
"]

ments, but is made to see.

Page 52, l 9 the indignation of merit, etc. "the indignation which Dryden wrote in 1683 to the then first commis-

sioner of the Treasury, Hyde, Earl of Rochester, begging for the more punctual payment of his salary. "I know not whether my Lord Sunderland has interceded with your lordship for half of my salary, but I have two other advocates, my extreme wants even to arresting, and my ill health, which cannot be repaired without immediately retiring into the country. A quarter's allowance is but the Jesuit's powder [quinine] to my disease; the fit will return a fortnight hence. If I durst, I would plead a little merit, and some hazards of my life from the common enemies; my refusing advantages offered by them, and neglecting my beneficial studies for the King's service; but I only think I merit not to starve. ... 'Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler."

l. 19. to which King James added the office of Historiographer. This is a mistake. Dryden received the two appointments of Poet-laureate and Historiographer-Royal at the same time, in August, 1670. See note on p. 6, l. 29.

}. 21. [casual, dependent upon events, uncertain. c. d. p.]

Page 53, l. 8. [169]. According to the Old Style the year began on March 25th, and according to the New Style on January 1st. The New Style did not become universal till 1752, and dates from January 1st to March 24 were accompanied by both numbers to avoid ambiguity. Here the date is 1698 (Old Style), 1699 (New Style). c. d. p.]

Page 54, l. 29. [the economy of government, the management of the money required to carry on the government. c. d. p.]

l. 30. the payments of the exchequer, etc. Compare the last note but one.

Page 55, l. 1. Of the only two men, etc. "Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us, 'When I was a young fellow I wanted to write the "Life of Dryden," and in order to get materials I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this, 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself, which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter-chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was then called his summer-chair. Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's'" (Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Globe ed., p. 380).

l. 3. [Will's coffee-house, on the north side of Russell Street, at the end of Bow Street, was, in Dryden's day, called the "Wits' Coffee-house," and was much resorted to by literary men. Johnson tells us that Pope, when a child, persuaded some friends to take him there in order to see Dryden. c. d. p.]

l. 12. He put great confidence in the prognostications of judicial astrology. Compare below, p. 110, l. 1. "Towards the latter end of this month, September, Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, according to his nativity, which, casting it myself, I am sure is true." Astrologists divided their art into "Natural Astrology," which predicted changes in the weather, and "Judicial Astrology," which foretold the destinies of men or of nations.

l. 14. the Life of Congress. The book referred to already at p. 46, l. 20.

l. 21. The utmost malice, etc. The quotation is from the *Annals Mirabilis*. "The stars," in the first line, should be "their stars." The poet is not speaking of the malice of the stars in general, but of the baneful influence of the stars ruling over the destinies of the city of London. For the rest, compare Christie's note, "A trine, or conjunction of planets in the form of a triangle, was considered fortunate by astrologers; and to 'frequent trines' Dryden adds another happy omen, the planet Jupiter in ascension. Dryden was learned in astrology, and a firm believer. The verb *swayed* here has an active meaning, *made to swayed*. 'These weights took off' is an absolute construction, *took* being used for *taken*."

l. 25. [the planetary powers, the influence which astrologers say is exercised by the planets over earthly affairs. C. D. P.]

l. 27. [obliquely, indirectly. C. D. P.]

by attributing the same to some of the Ancients. "Both Ovid and Chaucer were knowing in astronomy, of which Ovid's book of the *Roman Feast*, and Chaucer's treatise of the *Astrakole*, are sufficient witnesses. But Chaucer was likewise an astrologer, as were Virgil, Horace, Petronius, and Manilius" (Globe edition of Dryden, p. 497).

l. 28. [first taught us. See p. 26, l. 30] (C. D. P.)

Page 56, l. 2. the greatest dramatist, Shakespeare. Compare with Johnson's judgment here the well-known lines of Milton in *L'Allegro*:

"Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,  
Warble his native wood-notes wild."

Compare also Johnson here, below, p. 63, l. 13.

l. 3. [contended applies to dramatist (l. 2). C. D. P.]

l. 9. Essay on dramatic poetry, published in 1668. See page 6, above. The real title of the work is *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.

Page 57, l. 1. [laboured (here used transitively), elaborated, worked upon so as to make perfect. C. D. P.]

l. 12. The praise lavished by Longinus, etc. Longinus (died 273 A.D.) was a Greek writer, author of a treatise on the *Sublime*,

which has come down to us (unless, indeed, the work we have be a forgery, as is possible). Johnson is referring to the praise Longinus lavishes on a particular passage in one of Demosthenes' orations, in which the orator excited the Athenians to the highest pitch of military enthusiasm by an invocation addressed to the dead heroes of Marathon.

l. 14. [so curious in its limitations, so carefully limited and qualified. *Curious* is here used in its original sense of *full of care*. C. D. P.]

l. 18. [their emulation of reverence, their attempts to exceed Dryden's expressions of veneration for Shakespeare. C. D. P.]

l. 25. [censor, critic. The critic might not have been able to produce a passage so good as the one in which he found a fault. But, as Johnson says just below, Dryden proved his right to judge Shakespeare by showing his own power of writing. C. D. P.]

l. 31. Rymer. Already mentioned, p. 5, l. 3.

l. 33. *malim*, etc. "I would rather err with Scaliger than judge rightly with Clavius." The saying is, at least, as old as Cicero, who makes a character in one of his dialogues say that he would rather be in the wrong with Plato than in the right with any one else.

Page 58, l. 17. *con amore*, with love, with a real enjoyment of the labour for its own sake.

l. 29. [Palamon and Arcite; or, *The Knight's Tale*, one of the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. C. D. P.]

*Novimus*, etc. "We know what Dryden said of a certain poem of Chaucer's, a beautiful poem without doubt, and one worthy of much praise, but which Dryden, forsooth, declared to be not only written in true epic style, but the equal, if not the superior, of the *Iliad* or the *Aeneid*. But we know at the same time that the criticisms of that great man were not always of the most accurate sort, or in accordance with the severest rules of the art: in his opinion, that is apt to be best which is at the moment before him, and on which he is then engaged." Trapp has been mentioned before, p. 51, l. 17.

Page 59, l. 1. *constant to himself*, consistent with himself.

His defence and desertion of dramatic rhyme. For the defence, see p. 6, l. 10 *fg*. *Aureng Zebe* was the last of Dryden's rhyming tragedies. In the Prologue he begins by condemning himself his play, because it is written in rhyme:

"Our author by experience finds it true,  
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you;  
And, out of no feigned modesty, this day  
Damns his laborious trifle of a play;

Not that it's worse than what before he writ,  
But he has now another taste of wit;  
And, to confess a truth, though out of time,  
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme."

L. 3 Spence, etc. Joseph Spence, Professor of History at Oxford, wrote, among other works of a critical kind, an essay on *Pope's Translation of the Odyssey*, to a passage in which Johnson is here referring

L. 14 when he cannot disown, etc. Mr. Sharp points out that Johnson is probably thinking here of a passage in the preface to Dryden's *An Evening Love*. "It is charged upon me that I make debauched persons (such as, they say, my Astrologer and Gamester are) my protagonists, or the chief persons of the drama; and that I make them happy in the conclusion of my play, against the law of comedy, which is to reward virtue and punish vice. I answer, first, that I know no such law to have

L. 19. Sewall. "Preface to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" (Johnson's note).

L. 21 [Statius was a Latin poet of the first century. His chief work was the *Thebais* c. D. P.]

L. 24. Quæ, etc. The first line of the *Sylva* of Statius.

L. 27. condemned him to straw, and that he was undoubtedly mad. The phrase refers to the layers of straw that were in those days thought beds good enough for lunatics.

L. 22. [imprest, forced, pressed. c. D. P.]

L. 30. He cited *Gorbuduc*, which he had never seen. In the Dedication of *The Rival Lovers*, Dryden refers to *The Tragedy of Queen Gorbuduc* as an early example of a rhymed play, though the play he means is written in blank verse, and *Gorbuduc* is the king in it, not the queen.

L. 31. gives a false account, etc. In the Preface to his *Annus Mirabilis* Dryden cites Chapman's translation of Homer as one of several works in English written in verses of six feet, whereas Chapman's metre is one of seven feet.

l. 32. discovers, in the preface, etc. "You never cool while you read Homer, even not in the second book (a graceful compliment to his countrymen); but he hastens from the ships, and concludes not that book till he has made you an amends by the violent playing of a new machine." "Machine" here is used in the technical sense of a supernatural intervention in the plot of a poem. Dryden was certainly nodding in this passage, as the catalogue of the ships, which is the chief theme of the second book of the *Iliad*, is continued to the very end of that book, and the third book does not even begin with a "machine" of the kind he had in his mind. But Johnson should have said "without remembering" rather than "without knowing." It would be quite easy to put together a similar list of Johnson's own careless quotations or references.

Page 60, l. 1. [literature, learning. See p. 30, l. 26. c. d. p.]

l. 27. shows what he wanted, shows what he had not got to give. Compare "to want book-learning" in the sense of "to be without book-learning," next page, l. 19.

l. 29. unprovided of matter. We must now say, "unprovided with matter."

l. 32. [faculty, scientific profession or study. The term is now more commonly applied to the members of a scientific profession. c. d. p.]

l. 33. [images, figures of speech. c. d. p.]

Page 61, l. 3. [accidental intelligence, information obtained by accident. c. d. p.]

[various, varied, conversation on many subjects and with many persons. c. d. p.]

[a quick apprehension, the power of quickly grasping an idea. c. d. p.]

l. 5. [powerful digestion, great power of adapting ideas to his needs. c. d. p.]

l. 16. [desultory, irregular, inconstant. c. d. p.]

l. 17. [fortuitous, dependent upon chance. c. d. p.]

l. 22. [parts, abilities. The quotation is from *Threnodia Augustalis*, ll. 337-345, a funeral poem in memory of King Charles II. c. d. p.]

Page 62, ll. 9-11. [Johnson utters the same sentiments on p. 46, ll. 5-10. c. d. p.]

l. 19. another and the same. The same, yet not the same. Johnson is translating the Latin phrase "*alter et idem*."

l. 20. nor appears to have any art other, etc. Johnson is referring to the dictum of Horace, that the poet's highest art lies in concealing the fact that he is employing any art.

l. 25. [discriminative characters, peculiar features which serve to distinguish his style from that of others c. d. p.]

l. 27. [overcharged, exaggerated. c. d. p.]

l. 33. forced thoughts See the note on p. 2, l. 6.

l. 35. [Waller and Denham. See note on p. 2, l. 7. c. d. p.]

Page 63, l. 10. [scholastic, polished and accurate. c. d. p.]

[popular, colloquial, such as would be used in ordinary conversation and therefore not always accurate. c. d. p.]

l. 11. [gross, coarse and vulgar. c. d. p.]

l. 14. to whom their own original rectitude, etc. Compare p. 56, l. 2

l. 21. terms appropriated to particular arts, technical terms.

l. 23. defeat the purpose of a poet. Johnson returns to this subject below at p. 74, l. 24

Page 64, l. 5 [affluence, wealth of words. c. d. p.]

[comprehension, comprehensiveness, that is, the vast number of ideas which can be expressed by the language. c. d. p.]

l. 8 Ben Jonson thought it necessary, etc. With the passage which follows compare that at pp. 30, 31, where the same theme is treated

l. 9 [to copy Horace word by word, to translate each word separately instead of taking phrases and sentences as wholes. c. d. p.]

l. 10. [Feltham "was the author of a book very popular in its day—*Resolves: Divine, Political, and Moral*" (M. Arnold). c. d. p.]

l. 12. [Sandys (1577-1643) is known chiefly by the translation here referred to c. d. p.]

l. 13 [versifier, translator c. d. p.]

l. 15 [verses, lines of verse c. d. p.]

[Holyday (1593-1661), chaplain to Charles I., a learned man, left a translation of *Juvenal* and *Perseus* into poor verse with many learned illustrative notes. See p. 86, l. 32 fg c. d. p.]

l. 22 [left his authors, ceased to give a literal translation, and introduced ideas of his own c. d. p.]

l. 24. [poetical liberty, the extent to which a poetical translation might deviate from a literal rendering of the original. c. d. p.]

l. 30. [divaricate (a word now obsolete), diverge, literally, step in different directions (Lat. *varicare*, to spread the legs apart). c. d. p.]

l. 31. [correspondence, similarity of idiom c. d. p.]

l. 33. [paraphrase is a rendering which preserves the meaning without respect to the words or idioms employed; *metaphrase* is a rendering which preserves the order and nature of the words and idioms. c. d. p.]

Page 65, l. 7. [A translator is to be like his author, the language used by the translator is to resemble that used by the author whose work is translated. c. d. p.]

l. 11. Sir Edward Sherburne, author of *A Translation of the Dramas of Seneca*, to which he prefixed a *Brief Discourse concerning Translation*. The passage in Horace referred to is in that writer's *Ars Poetica*:

"Nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus  
Interpres"

("Nor will you be anxious only to give word for word as a faithful interpreter").

l. 18. [reason wants, etc., if the arguments put forward by Sir E. Sherburne are reasonable, there is no need to support them by quoting Horace. c. d. p.]

l. 22. [exigencies, conditions of poverty. See pp. 52-54. c. d. p.]

l. 36. [That which might have been is not known, that which exists can be seen. c. d. p.]

Page 66, l. 4. [occasional, produced by the requirements of some special occasion. c. d. p.]

l. 8. arbitrary. Chosen freely by himself.

l. 14. [ardent, hasty, produced in the *heat* of the moment. c. d. p.]

l. 18. [The occasional poet, the poet who writes only as required by occasion. See l. 4, above. c. d. p.]

l. 34. attended. Waited for.

Page 67, l. 15. [Davenant (1605-1668) succeeded Ben Jonson as court poet, and shared exile with the Stuarts. After the Commonwealth he was poet-laureate. His *Gondibert*, a heroic poem, was written about 1649. c. d. p.]

l. 18. [versification, style in which his lines were written. c. d. p.]

l. 19. [Donne (1573-1631), a poet who delighted men of fashion, but his style was unreal, and sacrificed sense to ingenuity. c. d. p.]

l. 20. the ambition of forced conceits. See the note on p. 2, l. 6.

l. 21. [forced conceits, unnatural ideas. A conceit is a *conception* of the mind. c. d. p.]

1 23. He, toss'd by Fate. This is the beginning, not the end  
of a line, in the original.

"He, toss'd by Fate, and hurled up and down,  
 Near to his father's sorrows with his crown,  
 Could taste." etc

128 Well might the ancient poets, etc. The council this time is so forced that no one has been able to say with certainty what Dryden meant. "Euphrono, a Greek name for night, is probably meant. It may be translated 'well minded' or 'well judging'" (Christie). "Christie supposes this reference to be to the word euphrono, which, however, means rather 'kind' than 'counsellor'." That 'night brings counsel' is a well nigh universal sentiment" (Saintsbury). The saying is, of course, common enough, but it has nothing to do with the teaching of adversity. It refers to the opportunity, for quiet deliberation which night affords. Saintsbury's interpretation is, therefore, to be rejected, but it is not certain that 'counsel is night'.

I was Monk, & the whole passage is a glorification of the skill with which Monk prepared and waited for the right moment in which to attack the contemplation of Charles II. It was his task to do this. He was the only person who the brain, nerves and muscles were for the only natural. The muscles and nerves were for the only natural. The spirit was for the only natural. The spirit was for the only natural. Monk was the only natural. Monk was the only natural.

punctuation after "see" which made nonsense of the passage. "At once" means 'at one and the same time' (brain and conduit).

l. 19. *Strook*. Gave the line a jerk with the view of fixing the hook fast in the fish.

l. 21. [labours, works upon. See p. 57, l. 1. c. d. p.]

l. 23. [leeches, doctors. c. d. p.]

l. 24. [While increasing pains show that the disease is not fully developed. c. d. p.]

l. 25. [they wait upon the ill, they watch the progress of the disease. c. d. p.]

l. 28. the improper use of mythology. Johnson had a strong objection to any collocation of Christian and non-Christian ideas that might seem to suggest that the two stood in any way on the same plane. Compare the passage at p. 51, l. 18. "Trapp's anger arises from his zeal, not for the author, but the priest; as if any reproach of the follies of paganism could be extended to the preachers of truth." Notice, also, how in the present passage, l. 31, the word "religion" is used, in the exclusive sense, of "the Christian religion," and is opposed to "mythology." His complaint against Dryden is, therefore, that the poet in this passage passes from mythology to religion without any hint of the gulf that separates the two. The meaning is obscured by the way in which Johnson printed the passage. From "After having rewarded" down to "Sacred history" is one sentence, and should be printed as such.

l. 30. With *Alga*, etc. Scott has the note, "The ceremonies of classical antiquity, observed by those who escaped from shipwreck, are here detailed. The *alga*, or seaweed, sprinkled on the altar, alluded to the cause of their sacrifice. Portunus, otherwise called Portumnus, was a sea god of some reputation. The Greeks called him Palemon, which was formerly his earthly name. He is mentioned by Virgil:

'Et Pater ipse, manu magna, Portunus euntem  
Impulit.'

l. 31. in the language of religion. In the quotation which follows, "Heaven itself is took by violence," is taken from a text of Scripture, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by storm" (*Matthew* xii. 12). Compare the passage quoted at p. 84 below from Dryden's *Lament for King Charles* (*Threnodia Augustalis*), where there is the same jumbling of Christian and Pagan ideas which Johnson is condemning here.

l. 37. one of the most awful passages of Sacred History. Johnson's objection is to any intermingling in one and the same

compared by the poet to the mercy shown by God to the Israelites

is certainly wrong

Page 69, l. 4. And, glass like, clearness mix'd with frailty bore The commas before and after "glass-like," which are found in some editions, were inserted by Scott. They do not appear to be wanted. The construction is, "and bore glass-like clearness with glass-like frailty," that is, "facility for reproducing what appeared before us, combined with liability to weakness." Christie compares

"*Angelo* Nay, women are frail too.  
*Isabel.* Ay, as the glasses where they view themselves,  
 Which are as easy broke as they make forms "

l. 17. Malherbe, a French poet and critic (1555-1628)

l. 27. [synod, council which consulted on religious affairs O N P ]

l. 30. there is not another "Dr Johnson hastily expressed his belief that this is the only instance in Dryden's poems of such a rhyme, which was common with his predecessors and his earliest

The following instance is from the second part of the *Conquest of Granada*, Act IV., Sc. iii. .

' This with the dawn of morning shall be done  
 You haste to make her execution "'

Christie's note on this passage

l. 32. [fruition is to be uttered as a word of four syllables, fru-i-ti-on, the last syllable rhyming with *lone* in *alone*. C. D. P.]

Page 70, l. 6. [bounds our eye, interrupts the view. C. D. P.]

l. 10. [Our sight is limited, our view terminates. C. D. P.]

l. 13. [orbs, globes, or spheres, symbolical of the extent of their power. One globe is supposed to be placed within the other, and to exactly fill the internal space. C. D. P.]

Page 71, l. 17. [unsociable matter, ideas which ought not to be, or which cannot readily be, associated with one another. The word is now usually applied to persons, and *dissociable*, or *discordant*, would be used. C. D. P.]

l. 30. [quatrain, stanza of four lines rhyming alternately. C. D. P.]

l. 32. he complains of its difficulty. See in passage at p. 6, l. 1, and the note there.

Page 72, l. 7. transferred the invention of fire-arms, etc. *Paradise Lost*, Bk. vi., l. 568 fg.

l. 12. [incidental disquisition, turning aside from the subject in hand to enlarge upon some topic or event only incidentally mentioned. For example, stanzas 155 to 164 form a digression on shipping and navigation, which is followed by an apostrophe to the Royal Society. C. D. P.]

l. 14. The general fault is, etc. Scott has pointed out that the metre of the poem proved a continual snare to Dryden as regards the point to which Johnson is referring. "This structure of verse has often laid him under an odd and rather unpleasant necessity, of filling up his stanza, by coupling a simile, or a moral, expressed in the last two lines, along with the fact which had been announced in the two first. When these comments, or illustrations, however good in themselves, appear to be intruded upon the narrative or description, and not naturally to flow out of either, they must be considered as defects in composition; and a kind of versification, which compels frequent recurrence to such expedients for filling up the measure, has a disadvantage for which mere harmony can hardly compensate."

l. 21. "*Orbem jam totum*," a poem attributed to the Latin poet Petronius Arbiter. [One of the chosen companions of the Emperor Nero, and director-in-chief of the imperial pleasures, hence his title *Elegantiae Arbiter*. Matthew Arnold, however, suggests that the poem is the *Pharsalia* of Lucan, a Latin poet of the first century A.D. C. D. P.]

l. 26. Proteus, a sea god to whom Neptune confided the care of his scaly flock, the fishes. He is mentioned in Wordsworth's sonnet, *The World is too much with us*,

"Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

L. 23. It would not be hard, etc. It is not easy to follow Johnson here. Modern taste certainly sees no such difference, either between the two couplets of this verse or between this verse as a whole and the verse which follows it, as appears self-evident to him. Of the two verses, indeed, most modern critics would prefer the first. It ought to be noted, as Dryden himself points out, that in the two lines about Proteus the poet is quoting Virgil, *Georg.* iv. 387-8.

L. 36. For tapers made two glaring comets rise. "A comet was seen on the 14th of December, 1664, which lasted almost three months: and another, the 6th of April, 1665, which was visible fourteen days. Appendix to Sherburn's *Translation of Manilius*, p. 241" (Scott).

barred, they put in for safety at Bergen. The attempt of the English, under the Earl of Sandwich, to cut them out was a disastrous failure, the real character of which is very faintly concealed in Dryden's reference to the affair.

L. 5. Dryden  
Guinea,  
won on  
gold in it.

L. 7. conscious of their store. The castor, or beaver, was believed to be aware of the reason why he was hunted, and to be capable on occasion of mutilating himself, that the hunter might take what he wanted and leave off pursuit. The ships here, of course, are compared to castors not yet reduced to that last extremity but still seeking to find safety in flight.

L. 18. Besiege the Indies, and all Denmark dare. The Indies were there in the shape of the ships with their costly Indian cargoes. Bergen belonged to the King of Denmark, and the attempt to violate the neutrality of the port was an invasion of his rights. The story at the time was that the King of Denmark had consented to the enterprise, but had, whether by accident or by design, failed to notify his purpose to the governor of the place.

L. 19. [These, the latter, i.e. the enemy c d r]

[those, the former, i.e. the English c d r]

L. 22. [hazard to destroy, run the risk of destroying.]

L. 25. [shatter'd porcelain: part of the cargo from the East; yet

celain was imported from China before the process of manufacture was discovered in England. c. D. P.]

l. 27. [by tempests, etc., the battle was stopped by a storm which prevented the English from capturing the enemy's fleet. c. D. P.]

Page 74, l. 5. The account of the different sensations, etc. The passage which follows is part of the account of the three days' fight in the Downs between the English under the Duke of Albemarle (the "great leader" referred to in the second verse) and Prince Rupert, and the Dutch under De Ruyter. The English fleet had separated, Prince Rupert having received instructions to go off in search of the French fleet, and Albemarle (Monk) and his detachment had to bear the brunt of the first day's fighting.

l. 11. [doubtful moonlight, the indistinctness of objects when seen by moonlight. c. D. P.]

l. 21. appropriated terms of art. What are commonly called "technical terms."

l. 27. not liberal, mechanical, such as, in the present case, shipbuilding.

Page 75, l. 2. in the dock, when describing the process of relitting the injured ships.

l. 10. And shake them from the rising beak in drops. The ship plunges headlong into the sea. If the seams had not been properly stopped, as described, the waves would find entrance. As it is, when the beak rises out of the water the waves are seen to be falling back from the seams in drops. Saintsbury prints "shakes," and says that Christie prints "shake" without authority. He adds that "the singular is barely possible (taking the previous line as parenthetical), and would express the result of the stopping." I find this more unintelligible than Dryden.

l. 11. Some the gall'd ropes, etc. "Marline, a piece of untwisted rope, dipped in pitch, and wrapped round a cable to guard it" (Scott). "Searcloth" in the next line is a verb. Sir Thomas Browne has "cereclothed" (searclothed) in the sense of wrapped in cerecloths. Tarpauling is pitched canvas.

l. 19. [Royal Society, founded in 1663 as the "Royal Society of London for promoting Natural Knowledge." c. D. P.]

l. 20. seasonable excursion and artful return, that is, from and to his subject proper.

[seasonable excursion, appropriate and well-timed departure from the subject in hand. c. D. P.]

l. 22. One line, however, leaves me discontented, etc. It is perhaps fair to remark that Johnson is a little inconsistent here.

If Dryden had done what Johnson wishes he had done, and "laboured science into poetry by explaining longitude," he would again have committed the fault for which Johnson has just blamed him. For "measure of longitudes" Dryden wrote in the first edition "knowledge of longitudes." Improved methods of finding the longitude from time to time during the ship's voyage are what is meant. Notice that "commerce" has the accent here on the second syllable.

l. 32. a mind better formed to reason than to feel. Johnson returns to this thought below, p. 91, l. 9 *fg.*

Page 76, l. 13 is taken from Seneca. This is not quite accurate. In the passage which Johnson has in his mind the elder Seneca records a tradition to the effect that Ovid was in the habit of saying that the line of Varro (not Virgil)—

"*Omnia poëtis erant placida composita quiete*"—

would have been much improved if the last three words had been omitted. Dryden, doubtless, took the hint for his phrase from the passage in Seneca.

l. 19. The ghosts of traitors, etc. "This most beautiful stanza requires but little illustration. London Bridge, as early as Shakespeare's time, was a place allotted for affixing the heads of persons executed for treason. Thus Cateby to Hastings

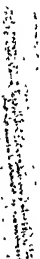
"The princes both make high account of you,  
For they account his head upon the bridge."

l. 24. [event, fulfilment (*l. evasus*, result). C D F]

l. 33. The poem concludes with a simile that might have better been omitted. The verse is as follows

"Thus to the eastern wealth through storms we go,  
But now, the Cape once doubled, fear no more;  
A constant trade wind will securely blow,  
And gently lay us on the spicy shore."

This prediction was as unfortunate in the event as the other was the reverse. In the very next year the Dutch, by the surprise of Chatham, inflicted the greatest humiliation of the war on



Henceforth a series of new times began,  
The mighty years in long procession ran;  
Once more the god-like David was restored,  
And willing nations knew their lawful lord."

l. 26. there is a long insertion, that is, a long passage contributed by Dryden to Tate's work.

l. 33 [discovers, shows. c. d. r.]

Page 79, l. 5. a man. Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, afterwards Lord Shaftesbury, had been a member of the Council of State after the dissolution of Marlborough's Parliament in 1653. In the beginning of the Civil War he had supported Charles I. c. d. r.]

[propensations, propensities, natural inclinations. c. d. r.]

l. 17 [his fanatic years, the time during which he supported Cromwell c. d. r.]

l. 18 [gears, dress. He was so accustomed to deceive that he was uneasy when playing the part of an honest man. c. d. r.]

l. 21. [first bias, early inclination to evil. c. d. r.]

Page 80, l. 2. nor was he serious enough to keep heathen fables out of his religion. See note on p. 63, l. 28.

l. 10 [the giant's war. The Titans, sons of Uranus (Heaven) and Ge (Earth), having been expelled from heaven, fought against their father and deposed him, establishing Cronus (Saturn) in his place. c. d. r.]

l. 12 [like Hezekiah's. See 2 Kings xx 6 c. d. r.]

l. 13. [Mrs. (or, as we should now say, Miss) Killigrew was maid of honour to the Duchess of York, and died of small-pox in 1685, in the twenty fifth year of her age c. d. r.]

l. 21. Fervet immensusque ruit. Horace's description of Pinhar's style.

l. 28 the word diapason is too technical. See the passage at p. 74, l. 24 fg

earth. c. d. r.]

l. 9 [it can owe little to poetry, poetry can do little to add to its awfulness. c. d. r.]

l. 22. [Eleonora, Countess of Abington, died May 31, 1691, in her thirty third year c. d. r.]

ll. 27-30. [These lines are descriptive of a Roman general's triumph. c. d. r.]

l. 30. [his pomp to crowd, to crowd all the magnificence of the procession into one day. c. d. r.]

Page 83, l. 13. The scheme of the work is injudicious, etc. See this objection already stated at p. 36, l. 10 fg. In what follows Johnson is referring to a passage at the beginning of the Second Part of the poem. The Panther has asked where "that wondrous wight, Infallibility," is lodged:

"First seat him somewhere, and derive his race,  
Or else conclude that nothing has no place";

to which the Hind rejoins:

"Suppose though I disown it, said the Hind,  
The certain mansion were not yet assigned;  
The doubtful residence no proof can bring  
Against the plain existence of the thing.  
Because philosophers may disagree,  
If sight by emission, or reception be,  
Shall it be thence inferred, I do not see?  
But you require an answer positive,  
Which yet, when I demand, you dare not give,  
For fallacies in universals live.  
I then affirm that this unfailing guide,  
In Pope and General Councils must reside;  
Both lawful, both combined," etc.

l. 22. is afraid to drink at the common brook.

"Among the rest the Hind, with fearful face,  
Beheld from far the common watering-place,  
Nor durst approach, till with an awful roar  
The sovereign Lion bade her fear no more."

The "Lion" being the King.

l. 26. the City Mouse and Country Mouse. See p. 36, l. 11 fg.

l. 33. bribed by the subject, since Pope was a Catholic.  
[*Bribed* is here used in the sense of *biassed* or *prejudiced*. C. D. P.]

Page 84, l. 16. [the pause, the stop in the middle of each line, except the fifth. C. D. P.]

l. 21. More haughty than the rest, etc. "The personal appearance of the Presbyterian clergy was suited by an affectation of extreme plainness and rigour of appearance. A Geneva cloak and band, with the hair close cropped, and covered with a sort of black skull-cap, was the discriminating attire of their teachers. This last article of dress occasioned an unseemly projection of their ears, and procured those who affected it the nickname of prick-eared fanatics, and the still better known appellation of Roundheads" ... (Scott). "Predestinating ears" are ears that showed, by the peculiarity Scott has described, that the wearer was one of those who accepted Calvin's doctrine of predestination.



Page 86, l. 6. [constitutional absurdity, absurdity in the constitution (construction) of the poem. C. D. P.]

l. 18. [impropriety, inappropriateness, unsuitability. C. D. P.]

l. 22. [ratiocination, process of reasoning from cause to effect. C. D. P.]

l. 24. poem on the Birth of the Prince of Wales. See p. 37,

l. 27 fg.

Page 87, l. 25. his version, etc. *The Pollio* is a name given to one of Virgil's *Eclogues*; the episodes mentioned are in the same poet's *Aenid*.

Page 88, l. 11. [arguments, summaries of the subject-matter. C. D. P.]

l. 18. Milbourn, a clergyman, attacked it. See p. 40, l. 21 fg.

l. 24. and sometimes licentious. Licentious here means free, not sticking closely enough to the original. See also p. 77, l. 35, "some lines are inelegant or improper, and too many are irreverently licentious." The word is used in what is now its most common meaning of lewd, impure, at p. 47, l. 33.

l. 30. [Trapp (1679-1747), an eminent divine. He translated the *Aenid* into blank verse (blank version, l. 32). See pp. 51, 53. C. D. P.]

l. 36. the clandestine refuge of school-boys. A 'crib,' as the school-boys call it, a translation which they use in secret.

Page 89, l. 6. [by opposing, etc., by setting lines of one version side by side with those of another for the purpose of comparison. C. D. P.]

l. 14. [The improvement in the parts may injure the whole. C. D. P.]

l. 21. [this predominance, this power of enchaining the attention of the reader. Dryden should be judged by the extent ("his proportion") to which he can command the reader's attention. C. D. P.]

l. 26. [Ariosto (1474-1533), an Italian poet, is chiefly known by his *Orlando Furioso*, a life work, published in sections at various periods during his life and after his death. The poem was written with the greatest care, in an easy and graceful style. C. D. P.]

Page 90, l. 13. [still, always. C. D. P.]

l. 21. [The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, published in 1697, and usually known as *Alexander's Feast*. Dryden wrote a previous Ode for St. Cecilia's Day in 1687. See p. 80. C. D. P.]

l. 30. [does not want, etc., is not lacking in lines which betray negligence. C. D. P.]

L 33. The conclusion is vicious, etc. The lines are:

"Let old Timotheus yield the prize,  
Or both divide the crown;  
He rais'd a mortal to the skies,  
She drew an angel down."

Page 91, L

real effect p

anciful effect, even --

reasonable for Dryden to suggest that they should share the crown between them (C. U. P.)

"... .."

"... .."

tears from many who found only artificial excitement in the heroic plays of the time (C. U. P.)

L 14. (images, illustrations which arouse the imagination C. U. P.)

L 17. (ratiocination. See p 86, L 22 (C. U. P.)

L 19. (contingence accidental circumstances (C. U. P.)

L 23. verbaque proviam rem the half of a quotation from Horace. The words which follow are a free translation

L 35. [a plagiarist, one who steals the literary work of another C. U. P.]

Page 93, ll. 8, 9 [See criticism by Settle, p 14 (C. U. P.)

L 29 These lines have no meaning, etc. Scott says that Dryden in this verse is unintelligible because he had conceived an idea approaching to nonsense while the words themselves are both poetical and expressive. Christy quotes Johnson on the verse, and says that it is difficult to perceive the resemblance to sense in it

L 31. (Capaneus, one of the seven heroes who made head against Thebes. Jupiter struck him with lightning because he dared to scale the walls of Thebes in defiance of the gods' command. See note on p. 13, L 33 (C. U. P.)

Page 94, l. 15. though it may not perhaps be quite clear in prose. "I cannot see why Johnson has thought there was any want of clearness in this passage even in prose. Addison has given us almost the very same thought in very good prose. 'If we look forward to Him (the Deity) for help we shall never be in danger of falling down those precipices which our imagination is apt to create. Like those who walk upon a line if we keep our eye fixed upon one point we may step forward securely. Whereas an imprudent or cowardly glance on either side will

infallibly destroy us'" (Note by "J. B." in Murphy's edition of *Johnson's Works*).

l. 27. [Just. In the first, the reference to "young diamonds" is contrary to nature; in the second, the genius (guardian spirit) of the castle is confused with the castle itself, and said to "bow its towery forehead. C. D. P.]

Page 95, l. 10. connects religion and fable too closely. This charge is brought here against Dryden for the third time in the *Life*. See the note on p. 63, l. 28.

l. 15. "When virtue spoons before a prosperous gale,  
My heaving wishes help to fill the sail."

*Hind and Panther*, Part III., 96.

l. 19. He had heard of reversing, etc. Johnson has mistaken the construction. "Revers'd" is an absolute construction, and means 'when Nature's optics had been revers'd.' All this criticism is petty.

l. 24. A hollow crystal pyramid, etc. "The love of conceit and point, that inveterate though decaying disease of the literature of the time, has not failed to infect the *Annus Mirabilis*. That monstrous verse, in which the extinction of the fire is described, cannot be too often quoted, both to expose the meanness of the image, and the confusion of the metaphor; for it will be noticed, that the extinguisher, so unhappily conceived, is not even employed in its own mean office. The flames of London are first a tallow candle; and secondly hawks, which, while pouncing on their quarry, are hooded with an extinguisher" (Scott).

Page 97, l. 14. Of Triplets and Alexandrines, etc. A Triplet is a combination of three lines with the same rhyme in place of the couplet that is the rule in the heroic stanza. An Alexandrine is a line of twelve, instead of the usual ten syllables. There is an example of both in the passage quoted above, p. 94, l. 22

"True, 'tis a narrow way that leads to bliss,

But right before there is no precipice;

Fear makes men look aside, and so their footing miss."

l. 24. [was the last. This *Hind* was published in 1598. C. D. P.]

Page 98, l. 8. Cowley was the first that inserted the Alexandrine at pleasure, etc. "This is an error. The Alexandrine inserted among heroic lines of the syllables is found in many of the writers of Queen Elizabeth's reign" (Murphy).

l. 13. [wrote some lines, the last three lines of *A Description of a City Shower* written in 1710, and first published in the *Tatler*. C. D. P.]

l. 31. the braces of the margins. The brackets, as we now call them, put at the side to show that three lines have a common

rhyme. The use of these brackets has been almost entirely given up in modern printing.

l. 35. [casualty, accidental changes of metre. A science is governed by fixed laws, and therefore does not admit of casualty or chance. C. D. F.]

Page 99, l. 7. [grateful, pleasing. C. D. F.]

l. 8. Fenton. Elijah Fenton, a poet than forgotten now, but in his own day of some reputation. He translated four books of the *Odyssey* for Pope.

l. 14. a weak or grave syllable. An unaccented syllable.

l. 15. Together over the Alps, etc. A couplet of Pope's. Johnson, as was common with him, quotes without taking the trouble to see if his memory has served him well. Pope wrote "fir'd" not "fill'd." So in the quotation immediately following Johnson puts "that" where Dryden wrote "who."

Page 100, l. 2. Davies. Sir John Davies (1569-1626) was the author of a philosophical poem, *Noce Trissina* (Know Thyself).

l. 5. What was said of Rome, etc. It was the Emperor Augustus himself, according to Suetonius, who described in this way the improvements he had wrought in Rome.

l. 13. that no particle of Dryden may be lost. This is hardly an adequate reason for inserting these observations in a life of Dryden. They are as much out of place there as the long quotation from Milbourne's version of Virgil. Johnson was weary of his task, and was glad to insert anything.

l. 19. [the tendre, the affections, the tender passion. C. D. F.]

Page 102, l. 11. [not quoad, etc., not on account of its superior merit, but as being the primary basis on which to construct the play. C. D. F.]

Page 106, l. 17. [event, result. C. D. F.]

Page 108, l. 30. the Library at Lambeth. Lambeth Palace, in London, is the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. VVyse was the librarian there in Dr. Johnson's time.

l. 23. A. B. C. That is, old *Barren* *Salem*, at the Holy See, the Court of the Pope.

l. 31. our style. Compare "your style," p. 100, l. 1. When Dryden wrote, England had not yet adopted the Gregorian reformation of the calendar. In all intercommunication, therefore, it was necessary to say whether the date given was according to the English style ("our style") or the style of the greater part of Catholic Europe.

Page 109, l. 14. He has missed of his design in the Dedication, etc. Toulson, the publisher, was extremely anxious that Dryden should dedicate his translation of Virgil to King William III.

which, however, Dryden sturdily refused to do. In the hope that Dryden would relent at the last, Tonson had given Aeneas throughout the pictures in the book the "hooked nose" of King William. The story became public, and Cunningham quotes from the Harleian MSS. an epigram with the heading, "To be published in the next edition of Dryden's Virgil."

"Old Jacob, by deep judgment sway'd,  
To please the wise beholders,  
Has plac'd old Nassau's hook-nosed head  
On poor Aeneas' shoulders.  
To make the parallel hold tack,  
Methinks there's little lacking;  
One took his father pick-a-pack,  
And t'other sent his packing."

l. 22. [St. Cecilia's Feast fell on Nov. 22, 1697. This song was *Alexander's Feast*. See note on p. 90, l. 21. c. n. p.]

l. 29. I remember the counsel, etc. His sons would appear to have asked him to write with more charity of the priesthood. See note on p. 51, l. 12.

Page 110, l. 2. Charles will begin to recover his perfect health, etc. See the note on p. 55, l. 12.

l. 9. the profits might have been more. If he had dedicated it to the King may be what is meant.

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